

HAND-BOOK  
FOR  
BIBLE CLASSES

*and Parents & Ministers*

ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL  
CHAPS. I-XII

BY

*Prof Lindsay, D.D.*



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The Gospel according to St.  
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*THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE—CHAPTERS I.-XII.*  
*BY THOMAS M. LINDSAY, D.D.*

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743 AND 745 BROADWAY,  
NEW YORK.



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE,

WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND MAPS.

*CHAPTERS I.-XII.*

BY

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PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AND CHURCH HISTORY, FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

SCRIBNER & WELFORD,  
743 AND 745 BROADWAY,  
NEW YORK.



## PREFACE.



THIS Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke has been written with the view of supplying as far as possible the kind of information required by the teacher of a Bible class or a senior class in a Sabbath school. It does not pretend to be a critical exposition of the Gospel from a new and original point of view, and the author has made free use, always with due acknowledgment, of every available source of information.

The introduction, analysis, and divisions have been made on the principle of looking at the Gospel of Luke as a life of Christ written for the Gentile converts of St. Paul. Accordingly the Introduction includes a short statement of the social and political state of Palestine, and of the Jews within the Roman empire, during the period of the Apostolic Church. Text-books of this kind should be as complete as possible, and I have not scrupled to include in this volume a good deal of material to be found in my *Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel*. I have taken most of the analyses of our Lord's discourses from Professor Godet's *Commentary*.

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW,  
1887.





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# THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE.



## INTRODUCTION.

### THE GOSPEL.

THE word Gospel (*God* or *good*; *spell*, discourse or tidings, εὐαγγέλιον) is very common in the New Testament, and denotes the message of the mission of Jesus Christ. Preaching the Gospel was to bear witness of Jesus, and to teach all nations to observe whatsoever Jesus had commanded (Matt. xxviii. 20; Acts i. 8). The gospel was the message of the life and work of the Christ, and His apostles were His messengers sent to proclaim it.

They were prepared for the work in two ways. They had been the companions of Jesus from the beginning to the end of His ministry. "Ye also bear witness," Jesus said, "because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (John xv. 27). They spoke "the things which they saw and heard" (Acts iv. 20); and no one could be an apostle who had not " companied with the Twelve all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up" (Acts i. 21, 22). Had Christ's life and work been a part of earth's history only,—one small streamlet going with multitudes of lesser rills to make the mighty tide of time,—this human companionship would have been preparation enough for the witness-bearing. But the disciples had to be taught of the Spirit sent from the Father ere they could know Jesus to be the Eternal Son. Their Master promised them this illumination.

“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me” (John xv. 26). They were prepared for their witness-bearing by their companionship with Jesus, and by the gift of the Spirit, who brought to their remembrance all things that Jesus said unto them (John xiv. 26); and their message was the words of men whose human insight was ruled and guided by the overmastering presence of the Spirit of truth, which enabled them to see and declare the Divine Saviour and His work of grace.

This gospel was not committed to writing at first. It was preached by word of mouth; it was an *oral gospel*, spoken by the apostles, and received by their hearers. The accounts of their sermons, preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, show how they understood the command of Jesus “to preach the gospel,” and what meaning they gave to the word itself. They did not think that the gospel was a statement of abstract doctrines, nor did they understand it to mean a complete biography of Jesus. They meant by the gospel a vivid representation of the purpose of salvation, as seen in the words, deeds, and sufferings of Jesus. “Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name” (John xx. 30, 31). No fact more vividly testified “that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God,” than the resurrection, and the earliest gospel was the “witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts iv. 33; also Acts i. 22, ii. 24–36, iii. 15, iv. 10, xiii. 31). The apostolic gospel began with the resurrection; it quickly introduced the Passion and its cycle of events, and, working backwards over the years of the ministry of Jesus, soon included those details of the life of Christ which best represented the divine purpose in it.

When the disciples met to choose a successor to Judas, they laid it down as a rule to guide them in their choice, that an apostle must have had personal knowledge of the life of Jesus between two well-known points, the baptism of John and the ascension (Acts i. 22).

When Peter preached to the household of Cornelius, he gave a short description of the work of Jesus, "which began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached," and ended with His manifestation after the resurrection (Acts x. 37-43). When Paul taught at Antioch in Pisidia, he sketched the details of Christ's life within the same limits (Acts xiii. 23-31). Everywhere we see in the speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles that the gospel of the first generation of Christians, the spoken sermons of the apostles, was a selection of representative facts from the many deeds and words of Jesus, made in such a fashion as would most clearly set forth the divine purpose of grace in His life and death and rising again. The resurrection and ascension were kept conspicuously in the foreground, the story of the Passion was told in detail, and a few incidents were selected which would fittingly relate the story of the life which preceded the death and the rising again. This selection of representative facts, which most vividly told the divine meaning of the life of Christ, was the gospel of the apostles, and formed the common groundwork of their teaching. It was the oral gospel.

It appears from the preface to St. Luke's Gospel that this oral gospel was taught to all catechumens or candidates for admission into the Church, and there is nothing unusual in the statement. It was a well-known custom among Jewish teachers to communicate what they had to impart by word of mouth, and the scholars committed to memory the instruction given in this way, and retained it word for word. This oral gospel, entrusted to the memories of disciples by men who had been first eye-witnesses of the word while they companioned with Jesus, and then its ministers after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, was held to be a sacred and precious treasure given in charge to Christians to keep. It was something in a peculiar way *delivered* to them (1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3) for safe keeping, *a tradition* (2 Thess. ii. 15), *a good thing committed to the Church* (2 Tim. i. 14) for safe keeping (1 Tim. vi. 20).

Soon, however, while the Apostolic Church remained, many Christians began to arrange in some kind of systematic order the facts thus committed to their charge, and perhaps to write them

down. These arrangements of the oral gospel lie between it and Luke's Gospel, he tells us (i. 1), and probably preceded all our four Gospels. The four evangelists worked on the twofold material of the oral gospel and of these arrangements made by men who had not been eye-witnesses, and out of their labours have come the Gospels of the New Testament canon. It is interesting to notice how Luke describes his method of writing his Gospel. Theophilus, for whom he writes in the first instance, had already been taught by word of mouth the gospel tradition, and Luke does not write his Gospel to correct false information, but to confirm its certainty. He claims that he has been in such a position as enabled him to trace the course of apostolic teaching from the beginning. He has had a continuous familiarity with all the details, and perhaps he intimates that he has been a personal companion of an eye-witness and minister of the word, and therefore is specially fitted to do the work he has undertaken. What Luke claims for himself may be claimed for the other evangelists. Their records faithfully embody and preserve the oral gospel and the evangelical tradition entrusted to the Church for safe keeping.

#### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

Tradition connects the written Gospel of Luke with the oral gospel of Paul. "Luke, also the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him," says Irenæus ; and Tertullian, after saying "of the apostles, John and Matthew first instil faith into us ; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards," proceeds to tell us that Paul was "the enlightener of Luke," and that men ascribe "Luke's form or summary (*digestum*) of the Gospel" to Paul. It has been, not unwarrantably, concluded that we have in Luke's Evangel the written record of that message of the Saviour which Paul calls *my gospel* in his Epistles to the Romans and to Timothy (Rom. ii. 16, xvi. 25 ; 2 Tim. ii. 8) ; and that we may read in his pages the exact form of the teaching about the life and work of Jesus which the great Apostle to the Gentiles preached on his memorable mission journeys.

## THE WRITER OF THE GOSPEL.

The writer was Luke or Lucas, "the beloved physician," frequently mentioned by Paul, whose companion he was, and the author of the Book of Acts. He was not an eye-witness and minister of the word from the beginning (Luke i. 2), and although an old tradition says that he was one of the seventy sent forth by our Lord during His last journey to Jerusalem (Luke x. 1-24), and identifies him as one of the two disciples to whom our risen Lord appeared as they went to Emmaus, it is more probable that he was converted to Christianity by the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

He was not a Jew (Col. iv. 11 and 14), and he first introduces himself into apostolic history when Paul was at Troas (Acts xvi. 8 : "*They*, passing by Mysia, came to Troas. . . 10 : And after he had seen the vision, immediately *we* endeavoured to go into Macedonia"). When Paul was in Galatia he had been forbidden, or rather *hindered*, from preaching the word in Asia (xvi. 6)—hindered by a severe sickness (Gal. iv. 13), and it was immediately after this illness that Luke the beloved physician (Col. iv. 14) became his companion. He went with Paul from Troas into Macedonia, to Samothracia, Neapolis, and Philippi, where they abode some time. When Paul left Philippi for Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica, Luke appears to have been left behind (Acts xvii. 1 : "Now, when *they* had passed. . ."). When he paid a second visit to Philippi on his third missionary journey, Luke was still there, and left the city with him (Acts xx. 5, 6). No record tells what Luke did during his stay ; but it is probable that he preached the word boldly, for Paul, writing to the Corinthians from Philippi, speaks of Luke as the brother whose praise is in the gospel in all the churches (2 Cor. viii. cf. 18 with the subscription). He was Paul's companion at Miletus, Tyre, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. He was with him in his journey to Rome (Acts xxvii. 1) ; he was near him in his first imprisonment, and comforted him in his labours (Philem. 24) ; and if, as is most likely, the Second Epistle to Timothy was written during Paul's last imprisonment, Luke was the great apostle's faithful companion during the last scenes in his life (2 Tim. iv. 11).



Scripture tells us no more about Luke ; but traditions uncertain and untrustworthy have completed the story of his life. He is said to have preached the gospel in Italy, in Macedonia, in Dalmatia, and in Gaul (France) ; to have lived on to an advanced age, and to have died a martyr. The last glimpse the Scriptures give us of him is in the Second Epistle to Timothy, written when Paul was brought before Nero the second time, when the Apostle says, " Only Luke is with me."

The two outstanding characteristics of the Third Evangelist, therefore, are that he was a Gentile and not a Jew, and that his Christian life, from its beginning, was spent in close companionship with the Apostle Paul. Jerome says that he was a Syrian and a native of Antioch, the city where the disciples were first called Christians, and where Gentile Christianity first established itself. It is possible that, when Luke tells us that he had traced the course of all things accurately from the first, he may be alluding to his fellowship with Paul, for the word translated *traced* also implies the personal attendance of a pupil on a master, and the careful following the course of teaching given. It should also be remembered that the author of the Third Gospel was also the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, who had seen and experienced the power of the gospel over Gentiles as well as over Jews, and who therefore was in full sympathy with the universality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### ITS RELATION TO THE OTHER GOSPELS.

Four separate Gospels are contained within the New Testament canon. Three of those are so like each other, and so evidently agree in recording so many of the same incidents in very similar language, that they have been called synoptical (*σύν, together; ὁψις, view*), because they look at the life of Jesus from a common point of view.

The oral gospels were spoken, and the written Gospels were committed to writing, that the hearers and the readers "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing they might have life in His name" (John xx. 30, 31). Paul, and



doubtless other evangelists, were accustomed "to frame their teaching to meet the wants of their hearers." This adaptation of the varied fulness of Christian truth to suit the needs of the widely-different types of hearers in which the old Roman world abounded, is reflected in the different Gospels.

The remarkable thing about the Synoptic Gospels, however, is not their differences, but their similarity, not to say sameness. No attentive reader can avoid observing how very few of the events in Christ's life have been preserved, and what a small number of days contribute all the incidents contained in the Synoptic Gospels. Usually, when three men describe the same event, it is wonderful how few words in the separate narratives are the same. The Synoptic Gospels, on the other hand, for the most part record the same representative facts in common words and phrases so curiously interlaced as to suggest that the writers have borrowed from each other or from a common source. It has been observed that if the total contents of the several Gospels be represented by 100, the following table is obtained :—

	Peculiarities.	Coincidences.
St. Mark, . . . . .	7	93
St. Matthew, . . . . .	42	58
St. Luke, . . . . .	59	41
[St. John, . . . . .]	92	8]

That is to say, that thirteen-fourteenths of St. Mark, four-sevenths of St. Matthew, and two-fifths of St. Luke are taken up in describing the very same incidents in very similar language. More than that, one-sixth of St. Mark and of St. Matthew, and one-tenth of St. Luke, are verbally the same. It is true that the strangeness of the verbal coincidences is somewhat diminished when it is observed that the larger proportion occur in reports of what Jesus said. Thus, if the contents of each Gospel be represented by 100, the following table is obtained :—

	(a) Narrative.	(b) Recitative.	Coincidences in (a).	Coincidences in (b).
St. Matthew,	25	75	2'08	14'56
St. Mark,	50	50	3'33	13'33
St. Luke,	34	66	'50	9'50 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 195-99.

But enough verbal coincidence remains to make the problem of the mutual relations of the Gospels most important.

Three, perhaps four, solutions have been given :—

1. *The three Gospels have been traced to a common written original*, either (a) one of our present Gospels, from which the other two have borrowed ; or (b) an original written Gospel different from any in the canon.

2. *The three Gospels have been traced to a common source, partly written and partly oral.*

3. *The three Gospels have been traced to a common oral gospel.*

Want of space forbids further discussion of this intricate point.<sup>1</sup> All that need be said here is, that the third solution is the best, and that every difficulty can be met by supposing each Gospel to be based on the common oral gospel of the apostles, and enriched by information got from a member of the apostolic circle. St. Matthew, who was an eye-witness, enlarged the oral gospel from his own experience ; St. Mark gives us Peter's vivid recollections ; while St. Luke's is the oral gospel of the apostles, with additions drawn from the gospel preaching of St. Paul, and from other trustworthy sources.

#### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

The Gospel of Luke has been variously described. Canon Westcott calls it "the Gospel of the nations, full of mercy and hope, assured to a whole world by the love of a suffering Saviour." Dr. Plumptre thinks it can best be described as "the Gospel of the *Saintly Life*." While Archdeacon Farrar says, "Luke's is the Gospel for the Greeks ; the Gospel of the future ; the Gospel of progressive Christianity, of the universality and gratuitousness of the gospel ; the historic Gospel ; the Gospel of Jesus as the Good Physician and the Saviour of mankind." It contains more fully than any of the others the history of the Forerunner and the gospel of the infancy, and it recounts with more fulness of detail our Lord's ministry during the period of His rejection, after He had left Galilee behind Him, and before Passion-Week had begun. It exhibits in fuller outline than any other the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my *Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel*, pp. 20-26.

relation of the Son of Man to His Father in heaven and to His brethren of mankind. It is the Gospel of the Fatherhood of God, and of the brotherhood of man.

1. *It is the Gospel of the Fatherhood of God.*

(a) Luke records the two sayings of Jesus on the cross, in which He calls on God His Father: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (xxiii. 34); and, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit* (xxiii. 46).

(b) Luke not only records the Lord's Prayer,—*Our Father*,—but in all the discourses following he is careful to give the appeals which Jesus makes to the Fatherhood of God (xi. 11-13, xii. 29-34).

(c) Luke calls special attention to the prayers of Jesus, and alone records the fact that Jesus prayed on six notable occasions:—(1) At His baptism (iii. 21); (2) after cleansing the leper and a night of labour in healing (v. 16); (3) before calling the Twelve Apostles (vi. 12); (4) before the transfiguration (ix. 28, 29); (5) on the cross for His murderers (xxiii. 34); and (6) with His latest breath (xxiii. 46). He also tells us that Jesus taught His disciples to pray without ceasing (xi. 8, xviii. 1, xxi. 36), and that He encouraged persistent importunity in prayer in the parables of the Friend at Midnight (xi. 5-13), and of the Unjust Judge (xviii. 1-6).

(d) Luke insists on the duty of glorifying God (ii. 20, v. 25, xiii. 13, xviii. 43, xxiii. 47). His Gospel begins with the thanksgivings of Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, and Simeon, and it ends with the disciples "praising and blessing God."

(e) Finally, St. Luke's Gospel records no less than five New Testament hymns, which have all found entrance at one time or another into the public worship of the Church: the song of the annunciation (i. 28-33), the *Magnificat* of the Virgin Mary (i. 46-55), the *Benedictus* of Zacharias (i. 68-79), the *Gloria in Excelsis* of the angels (ii. 14), and the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon (ii. 29-32).

2. *It is the Gospel of the brotherhood of mankind.*

(a) No evangelist dwells so minutely on the humanity of Jesus which He had in common with every son and daughter of the human race:—

(1) Luke alone tells us something about every stage of our Lord's human existence : as a babe (ii. 16), as a child (ii. 27), as a boy entering on manhood (ii. 40, 42), and as a man (iii. 23), while he alone also tells us about the birth, infancy, and education of the Baptist.

(2) He alone paints touchingly the poverty of the household at Nazareth (ii. 24).

(3) No evangelist so fully states what Christ and His gospel did for womanhood. Commentators are almost universally agreed that the first two chapters "show in every line the pure and tender colouring of a woman's thoughts." He alone tells us about the annunciation, the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, the heartaches of the Virgin Mother, and the service in the Temple of the prophetess Anna. It is to Luke that we owe our knowledge of the ministry of woman (viii. 1-3), the picture of Martha and Mary in the household at Bethany (x. 38-42), and the warning and consolation addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem who followed Jesus weeping to Calvary (xxiii. 28). He tells us how Jesus had compassion on the *widow* of Nain (vii. 13) ; how He called the poor sick woman of Capernaum, compelled to tell her tale before a crowd of men, *Daughter* (viii. 48) ; how he comforted another by calling her a *daughter of Abraham* (xiii. 16) ; and how he pardoned a woman that was a sinner, and permitted her to anoint His feet (vii. 37).

(4) No evangelist so fully brings out Jesus' sympathy for the poor, the outcast, and the bereaved.

(1) *The poor.* (1) The beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount are addressed to the poor, to the hungry, and the reviled (vi. 20-22). (2) He alone records the parables of Dives and Lazarus (xvi. 20-31), of the rich fool (xii. 16-21), of the midnight visit of a poor man to his poor neighbour (xi. 5-8), of the Great Supper, with invitations to the "poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind" (xiv. 21). (3) No evangelist so fully records our Saviour's exhortations to charity and alms-giving (vi. 30, xi. 41, xii. 33, etc.). (4) He describes the angel's visit to a humble village maiden (i. 27, 28), to humble shepherds (ii. 8), and the recognition of Jesus in the Temple, not by priests, but by Simeon and Anna (ii. 25-38).

(2) *The outcast.* Luke delights to recall Jesus' dealings with those who were outside the pale of Jewish society. He came to seek and save them that were lost. He alone tells us the parable of the *Good Samaritan* (x. 25-37), of the *Publican* whose prayer was accepted (xviii. 9-14), of the *Prodigal Son* (xv. 11-32), and of the *Lost Piece of Silver* (xv. 8-10). He tells us the story of the nameless harlot who was pardoned (vii. 36-50), of Mary Magdalene the demoniac (viii. 2), of the thankful Samaritan leper (xvii. 11-19), of Zacchæus (xix. 1-10), and of the Dying Thief (xxiii. 39-43).

(3) *The bereaved.* Luke tells us that the son of the widow of Nain was an *only* son (vii. 12), that the daughter of Jairus was an *only* daughter (viii. 42), and that the demoniac boy was his father's *only* son (ix. 38).

(d) No evangelist so fully paints the divine tolerance of true Christianity, and the universality and freedom of the gospel:—(1) He tells how Jesus rebuked the persecuting and hot-tempered spirit of James and John (ix. 54-56), and the spirit that refused also sympathy to a man who was working in Christ's name, but not with the disciple company (ix. 49, 50). (2) He records instances of blessings bestowed on the heathen, on the widow of Sarepta, and on Naaman the Syrian (iv. 26, 27); Jesus was to come to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death (i. 79), and His disciples were commanded to preach the gospel to *all nations* (xxiv. 47).

#### WHEN, WHERE, AND FOR WHOM WRITTEN.

These questions can only be answered vaguely. The Gospel was written before the Acts of the Apostles. It is difficult to believe that the Acts was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and the most generally received date of its production is 63-64 A.D. The Gospel was therefore written some time before 64 A.D.; perhaps at Cæsarea, during Paul's imprisonment there, when Luke was in attendance on the apostle (60-63 A.D.); perhaps at Rome during Paul's sojourn there in 63-64 A.D.

The Gospel was written in the first place for Theophilus, and in the second place for all Gentile Christians, and especially for those



in churches founded by the Apostle Paul. Its author was a Gentile and a convert of Paul's, and was therefore in fullest sympathy with his readers.

### ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL.

The analysis has been constructed on the principle of bringing before the student the outstanding features in the life of Jesus, the God-man.

#### Part I.—The Gospel of the Infancy and Boyhood of Jesus, i., ii.

##### i. INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL, i. 1-4.

##### ii. THE ANNUNCIATIONS, i. 5-56.

1. Annunciation of John's birth, . . . . . 5-25.
2. Annunciation of Jesus' birth, . . . . . 26-38.
3. Mary with Elisabeth.
  - (a) Elisabeth's hymn of praise, . . . . . 39-45.
  - (b) Mary's hymn of thanksgiving—*The Magnificat*, . . . . . 46-56.

##### iii. INFANCY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, i. 57-80.

1. Birth and circumcision of John, . . . . . 57-66.
2. Hymn of Zacharias—*The Benedictus*, . . . . . 67-80.

##### iv. INFANCY OF JESUS, ii. 1-52.

1. Birth in the stable, . . . . . 1-7.
2. The angels and the shepherds, . . . . . 8-20.
3. Circumcision and presentation in the Temple, . . . . . 21-24.
4. Songs of Simeon and Anna, . . . . . 25-40.
5. Visit to the Temple, . . . . . 41-50.
6. Growth to manhood, . . . . . 51, 52.

#### Part II.—The Preparation and Year of Quiet Work in Judea and Galilee, iii. 1-iv. 14.

- i. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, . . . . . iii. 1-20.
- ii. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, . . . . . 21, 22.
- iii. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS, . . . . . 23-38.
- iv. THE TEMPTATION, . . . . . iv. 1-13.

Luke omits between iv. 13 and iv. 14, a period of fourteen months :—

- (1.) *The return of Jesus to Galilee by Bethabara, and the first call of Andrew, Simon, and Philip* (John i. 29-51).
- (2.) *From Nazareth to Cana—Water turned to wine* (John ii. 1-11).
- (3.) *From Cana to Capernaum* (John ii. 12).
- (4.) *From Nazareth to Jerusalem and stay in Jerusalem—First Passover journey* (John ii. 13-iii. 21).

- (5.) *From Jerusalem to Ænon in Judea—Troubles there with John's disciples—Back to Nazareth through Samaria* (John iii. 22-iv. 43).  
 (6.) *From Nazareth to Cana—Nobleman's son* (John iv. 43-54).  
 (7.) *From Nazareth to Jerusalem and stay there till He hears of the imprisonment of John the Baptist—Second Passover journey* (John v. 1-47).

**Part III.—The Year of Popularity—Christ's Ministry in Judea, iv.-ix. 10.**

*From the imprisonment of John the Baptist, until Jesus hears of his death, our Lord made preaching journeys from Capernaum through Galilee.*

**i. FROM NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM, iv. 14-30.**

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Teaching in Galilee, . . . . .         | iv. 14, 15. |
| 2. First rejection at Nazareth, . . . . . | iv. 16-30.  |

**ii. FIRST SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, iv. 31-41.**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. The demoniac cured, . . . . .                                | iv. 31-37. |
| 2. The cure of Peter's wife's mother and many others, . . . . . | iv. 38-41. |

**iii. FIRST PREACHING JOURNEY THROUGH GALILEE, iv. 42-v. 16.**

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Retirement to a desert place, . . . . . | iv. 42-44. |
| 2. Miraculous draught of fishes, . . . . . | v. 1-11.   |
| 3. Cleansing of a leper, . . . . .         | v. 12-16.  |

**SECOND SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, v. 17-vi. 11.**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Paralytic cured, . . . . .                                     | v. 17-26. |
| 2. Call of a publican to be a disciple, . . . . .                 | v. 27-32. |
| 3. Discourse on fasting, . . . . .                                | v. 33-39. |
| 4. The disciples pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath day, . . . . . | vi. 1-5.  |
| 5. Man with withered hand, . . . . .                              | vi. 6-11. |

**v. SECOND PREACHING JOURNEY, vi. 12-49.**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Call of the Twelve Apostles, . . . . . | vi. 12-19. |
| 2. The Sermon on the Mount, . . . . .     | vi. 20-49. |

**vi. THIRD SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, vii. 1-10.**

Cure of centurion's servant.

**vii. THIRD PREACHING JOURNEY, vii. 11-viii. 3.**

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Jesus at Nain. The widow's son, . . . . .            | vii. 11-17. |
| 2. Message from John in prison, . . . . .               | vii. 18-23. |
| 3. Jesus on John the Baptist, . . . . .                 | vii. 24-35. |
| 4. Dinner at the house of Simon the Pharisee, . . . . . | vii. 36-50. |
| 5. Preaching in the villages, . . . . .                 | viii. 1-3.  |

**viii. FOURTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, viii. 4-21.**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Parables of the Kingdom—               |              |
| (1) The sower, . . . . .                  | viii. 5-15.  |
| (2) The lamp, . . . . .                   | viii. 16-18. |
| 2. Opposition of His relatives, . . . . . | viii. 19-21. |

## ix. FOURTH PREACHING JOURNEY IN GALILEE, viii. 22-39.

- |                           |           |        |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------|
| 1. Stilling the storm,    | . . . . . | 22-25. |
| 2. The Gerasene demoniac, | . . . . . | 26-39. |

## x. FIFTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, viii. 40-56.

- |                            |           |                    |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. The daughter of Jairus, | . . . . . | 41, 42, and 49-56. |
| 2. The sick woman,         | . . . . . | 43-48.             |

## xi. FIFTH PREACHING JOURNEY IN GALILEE, ix. 1-9.

*Luke omits the second rejection at Nazareth.*

- |                               |           |          |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. The mission of the Twelve, | . . . . . | ix. 1-6. |
| 2. Herod's inquiries,         | . . . . . | 7-9      |

## xii. SIXTH SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, ix. 10.

Return of the Twelve.

## Part IV.—The Year of Opposition, ix. 10-xix. 28.

## A.—Seclusion in Galilee—Journeys of Flight.

*From the Passover to the Feast of Dedication.*

## i. FIRST JOURNEY OF FLIGHT: ACROSS THE SEA OF GALILEE, ix. 10-17.

Retirement to Bethsaida Julias. Feeding 5000, . . . 10-17.

*Luke omits seventh sojourn in Capernaum (Matt. xv. 1-20)—The second flight to Tyre and Sidon (Matt. xv. 21-28) and round by the Decapolis (Matt. xv. 29-39)—The return to Capernaum and the beginnings of the third flight to the territories of Herod Philip (Mark viii. 11-27).*

## ii. THIRD JOURNEY OF FLIGHT, ix. 18-45.

- |   |           |         |
|---|-----------|---------|
| 1. Peter's confession,                    | . . . . . | 18-21.  |
| 2. First clear prediction of the Passion, | . . . . . | 22-27.  |
| 3. The transfiguration,                   | . . . . . | 28-36.  |
| 4. The demoniac boy,                      | . . . . . | 37-43.  |
| 5. Second prediction of the Passion,      | . . . . . | 44, 45. |

## iii. RETURN TO CAPERNAUM (NINTH SOJOURN), ix. 46-50.

The disciples taught humility, . . . . . 46-50.

## B.—Period of Work in Perea and Judea.

Luke omits between ix. 50 and 51, an interval of not less than three months:—

- (1.) *Jesus' journey to Jerusalem to Feast of Tabernacles—He goes secretly—The people ask, Where is He?—Jesus appears in the Temple and teaches—The Jews wish to arrest Him—Nicodemus' plea—The adulteress brought to Him—Attempt to stone Him—Heals man blind from birth—Parable of Good Shepherd (John vii. 2-x. 21).*
- (2.) *Return to Galilee.*



**I. LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—FEAST OF DEDICATION.**

1. Attempts to go through Samaria, . . . . .	ix. 51-62.
2. Mission of the Seventy, . . . . .	x. 1-24.
3. The Lord's Prayer, . . . . .	xi. 1-13.
4. The dumb demoniac, and accusations of the Pharisees, . . . . .	14-36.
5. Dines with a Pharisee, . . . . .	37-54.
6. The leaven of the Pharisees, . . . . .	xii. 1-12.
7. The rich fool : Discourses, . . . . .	13-59.
8. The parable of the barren fig-tree, . . . . .	xiii. 1-9.
9. Woman healed on the Sabbath day, . . . . .	10-17.
10. Parables of the Kingdom, . . . . .	18-21.
11. Jesus warned against Herod, . . . . .	22-35.
12. Offences, forgiveness, faith, and sacrifice, . . . . .	xvii. 1-10.
13. Ten lepers healed. Gratitude, . . . . .	11-19.
14. The coming of the Kingdom, . . . . .	20-37.
15. The unfortunate widow, . . . . .	xviii. 1-8.
16. The Pharisee and the Publican, . . . . .	9-14.
17. Blessing little children, . . . . .	15-17.
18. The rich young ruler, . . . . .	18-30.

**ii. FROM PEREA TO JERUSALEM.**

1. The Good Samaritan, . . . . .	x. 25-37.
2. At Bethany, . . . . .	38-42.

**iii. FLIGHT TO THE PEREA.**

1. Jesus dines with a Pharisee, . . . . .	xiv. 1-14.
2. Parables, . . . . .	xiv. 15-xvi. 31.
(1.) The great supper, . . . . .	xiv. 15-24.
(2.) The unfinished tower, . . . . .	25-30.
(3.) The prudent king, . . . . .	31-33.
(4.) The savourless salt, . . . . .	34, 35.
(5.) The lost sheep, . . . . .	xv. 1-7.
(6.) The lost piece of silver, . . . . .	8-10.
(7.) The prodigal son, . . . . .	11-32.
(8.) The wasteful steward, . . . . .	xvi. 1-12.
(9.) The rich man and Lazarus, . . . . .	13-31.

**iv. FLIGHT TO EPHRAIM FROM BETHANY.**

1. Third clear prediction of the Passion, . . . . .	xviii. 31-34.
2. At Jericho : blind Bartimæus, . . . . .	35-43.
3. Zacchæus, . . . . .	xix. 1-10.
4. Parable of the pounds, . . . . .	11-27.

**Part V.—The Events of the Passion Week, xix. 28-xxiii. 56.****i. THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.**

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem, . . . . .	xix. 29-44.
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## ii. MONDAY.

The Temple cleansed, . . . . . xix. 45-48.

## iii. TUESDAY.

1. The questions of Scribes and Pharisees, . . . . . xx. 1-8.
2. The labourers in the vineyard, . . . . . 9-19.
3. Catching questions, . . . . . 20-40.
  - (1.) The Pharisees ask about tribute-money, . . . . . 20-26.
  - (2.) The Sadducees ask about the resurrection, . . . . . 27-40.
4. Jesus' counter-question, . . . . . 41-47.
5. The widow's mite, . . . . . xxi. 1-4.
6. The doom of the Temple, and the end of all things, . . . . . 5-38.

## WEDNESDAY.

Jesus in quiet at Bethany—Judas the traitor in Jerusalem, xxii. 1-6.

## v. THURSDAY.

1. Preparation for the Passover, . . . . . xxii. 7-13.
2. Institution of the Lord's Supper, . . . . . 14-30.
3. Peter's protestations, . . . . . 31-38.
4. Gethsemane, . . . . . 39-46.
5. Jesus taken prisoner, . . . . . 47-53.

## FRIDAY.

1. The Jewish trial, . . . . . xxii. 54, 63-71.
2. Peter's denials of Jesus, . . . . . 54-62.
3. The Roman trial, . . . . . xxiii. 1-25.
4. The crucifixion of Jesus, . . . . . 25-38.
5. The penitent thief, . . . . . 39-43.
6. The death, . . . . . 44-49.
7. The burial, . . . . . 50-53.

## vii. JEWISH SABBATH.

The rest of Christ in the tomb, . . . . . xxiii. 54-56.

**Part VI.—The Resurrection and Ascension, xxiv.**

1. The visit of the Maries and of Salome, . . . . . xxiv. 1-4.
2. The resurrection, . . . . . 5-12.
3. Appearances after the resurrection:—
  - (1.) To two disciples, . . . . . 13-35.
  - (2.) To the eleven, . . . . . 36-43.
  - (3.) The last charge and the ascension, . . . . . 44-51.
  - (4.) Waiting for Pentecost, . . . . . 52, 53.

## THE LAND OF PALESTINE DURING OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

(1) *Physical Features.*<sup>1</sup>

The Land of Palestine is a mountainous country, filled by a multitude of hills and clumps of rising ground thrust forth from the Lebanon range, and stretching onwards to the extreme south. This confused mass of hills forms the centre or backbone of the country, and is bordered on both sides by a belt of lowland or plain, on the west washed by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east forming the strange trench or furrow which extends from the foot of Lebanon to some miles north of the east spur of the Red Sea, and which in its northern portion is the Jordan valley, lying mostly far below the sea-level. East of the Jordan the ground again rises in precipitous steeps, and stretches eastward in a great tableland. For centuries the sea has been encroaching on the maritime plain, and low dunes of white sand, a marked feature in the landscape, separate the waters of the Mediterranean from the fertile wheat-producing land. These outstanding physical characteristics gave Palestine its well-known divisions :—(1) *The coast*, (2) the *maritime plain*, (3) the *hill country*, (4) the *vale* or Jordan valley, and (5) the *south* or wilderness, where Judea slopes down into the desert (comp. note on i. 39).

The maritime plain was the highway between the great Egyptian and Assyrian Empires, and was full of cities where Latin and Greek names tell of foreign conquests and Gentile inhabitants. The armies of Egypt and Assyria, of Greece and of Rome, marched and re-marched along this plain, without ever seeking at first to penetrate within the long wall of heights which closed in their broad, level roadway. Hence the highlands were the real home of the people of the land. The mountains brought peace, and the little hills justice to the people, and they looked to the hills whence came their aid.

The hill country, enclosing small fertile plains and valleys, stretched from the foot of Lebanon in the north to the wilderness of Judea in

<sup>1</sup> Compare *Handbook on Palestine*, by Rev. A. Henderson. Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark.

the south. Its northern portion, or Galilee, which included the plain of Esdraelon, was luxuriantly fertile; the fairest and fruitfulest portion of the land. Samaria, just south of Galilee, and lying like a wedge between it and Judea, was covered with wood, and was full of rich alluvial valleys. Judea, in the south, was the poorest part of the land, with a shepherd or pastoral population.

### (2) *Political Condition.*

Before our Lord entered on His public ministry, the kingdom of Herod the Great had passed away. Judea and Samaria had become incorporated in the Roman province of Syria, and were ruled by a procurator who resided usually at Cæsarea. At first the severity of the Roman government did not make itself apparent. It was the policy of Augustus to spare the provinces, and respect the religious beliefs of the conquered peoples.

He died 14 A.D., and Tiberius succeeded him. Then the government gradually changed. The procurator, Valerius Gratus, changed the high priests at pleasure, until he found a pliant tool in the Sadducee Joseph, called Caiaphas. The rule of Pontius Pilate was still more severe. The Roman cohorts marched through Jerusalem, with the standard surmounted with the image of the emperor, the god of the regiment. The temple was defiled with Roman money and Roman arms. Revolts began, and patriotic freebooters strove to maintain themselves in the country. But, on the whole, while revolt was put down, the Jewish state was not very harshly treated. The feasts were celebrated; they were ever honoured by the custom of pardoning a criminal, whom the people would.

Galilee and the Perea became a separate province, governed by Herod Antipas, as his father had governed Palestine; Philip exercised a similar but milder rule over Gaulonitis; Judea and Samaria formed a Roman province ruled by a governor, who lived usually in the Roman town of Cæsarea.

The political condition of the country sheds light on much of our Lord's history. The Romans were accustomed to interfere little with the national customs or laws of the conquered peoples. Hence

in Judea, which was directly under Roman rule, the national system of government through the Sanhedrin remained in power, only checked at certain well-defined points by Roman control; while in Galilee and Gaulonitis, native princes were practically unfettered in their government so long as their subjects were quiet, and the tribute was paid. The Sanhedrin were able to persecute Jesus in Judea, and Herod had power to slay Him in Galilee. Before His hour was come, He was able to escape from Herod by crossing the lake to the territories of Philip; He was able to elude the Sanhedrin by crossing the Jordan to the Perea.

### (3) *The Social Condition of the People.*

The social condition of Palestine was by no means prosperous, and it had been gradually growing worse under Roman domination. The Roman system of taxation was the great blot upon the imperial administration, and in the end exhausted the empire. All Roman provinces had to pay two direct contributions: a land-tax payable by all cultivators of the soil, and an income-tax, to include those who had escaped the land-tax. These taxes, with many other indirect tolls, etc., were farmed out to *publicani*, and were relet sometimes twice over. The State always got its money, but the double or treble profit had to be wrung from the unfortunate cultivators of the soil. The result of this appears to have been worst in the eastern provinces, and Roman historians record that the burdens of taxation were producing chronic poverty, with its accompaniment of rebellion. The parables of Jesus reveal constantly the impoverishment of the land and of the people. Debt abounds, and with debt usury. In one parable everybody except the king is bankrupt; the steward is in debt to the king, and the servant to the steward (Luke vii. 41; Matt. xviii. 23). The creditor seizes the poor debtor in the street, the judge's officer is ready to cast him into prison, where he remains till squeezed of the last farthing, or, if he has no money, till he is sold with wife and children into slavery, and payment has been made (Luke xii. 58, 59; Matt. xviii. 25). Oil and wheat, the necessities of life, are furnished on credit (Luke xvi. 6, 7); buildings

are begun, and remain unfinished for want of money (Luke xiv. 29). This general impoverishment is the soil in which flourish those who live on their neighbours' ills. Speculators keep their grain back from the market and enlarge their storehouses (Luke xii. 18). Usury flourishes. The speculator soon multiplies his capital fivefold and tenfold (Luke xix. 16, 18). In these and many other ways our Lord describes in simple parables the impoverishment of His countrymen.

## JOURNEYS OF JESUS.

### I. John's places of baptizing :—

1. At the Jordan ford near Jericho, where Jesus was baptized (Matt. iii. 13, see below).
2. At Bethabara, near the Bethshean ford, twelve miles south of Sea of Galilee, where John bore witness to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" (John i. 29-37).
3. At Ænon, five miles north-east of Jerusalem, in a secluded valley full of springs and pools, where Jesus' disciples and John's disputed about baptizing (John iii. 23).

### II. The Journeys of our Lord :<sup>1</sup>—

(Went up to Passover from Nazareth to Jerusalem, being twelve years old, Luke ii. 41-52.)

#### I. Year of Quiet Work in Judea and Galilee.

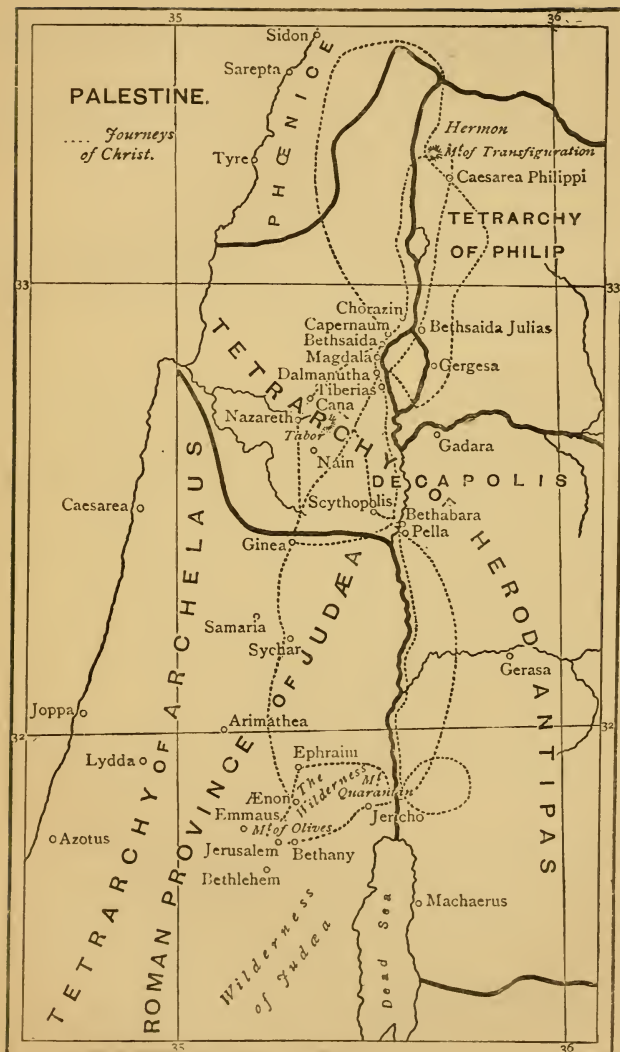
##### 1. JESUS GOES UP TO BE BAPTIZED.

- (1) From Nazareth to Jericho ford of Jordan (Matt. iii. 13; Mark i. 9; Luke iii. 21).
- (2) From Jordan to Wilderness of Temptation (Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1-13).
- (3) Thence to Bethabara on Jordan, twelve miles south of Sea of Galilee, John's second baptizing station (John i. 29-37).
- (4) From Bethabara, with Andrew, Simon, and Philip, back to Nazareth (John i. 38-51).

##### 2. FROM NAZARETH TO CANA—water turned to wine (John ii. 1-11).

##### 3. FROM CANA TO CAPERNAUM (John ii. 12).

<sup>1</sup>The separate journeys of our Lord are not indicated on the map by special marks; the reader is expected to follow the dotted lines with the aid of this list.





## 4. FIRST PASSOVER JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

- (1) From Capernaum or Nazareth through Galilee to Bethshean ford, thence by Jordan valley, east side, to Jericho ford and Jerusalem (John ii. 13-iii. 21).
- (2) From Jerusalem to Ænon. Jesus' disciples baptize. Troubles with disciples of John. Goes back to Galilee through Samaria. Sychar and Samaritan woman. Thence to Nazareth (John iii. 22-iv. 45).

## 5. NAZARETH TO CANA—nobleman's son cured (John iv. 46-54).

## 6. SECOND PASSOVER JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

- (1) From Nazareth by the same route as before to Jerusalem. There Jesus cures impotent man at Bethesda. The Pharisees seek his life. Hears of John's imprisonment (John v. 1-47).
- (2) Back to Nazareth by the Jordan valley as He had come (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14).

## ii. Year of popularity.

1. FROM CAPERNAUM THROUGH THE NEIGHBOURING TOWNS—Chorazin, Bethsaida, Magdala, and then through a portion of Galilee (Matt. viii. 1-4; Mark i. 35-45; Luke iv. 42-44, v. 12-16).
2. FROM CAPERNAUM TO THE MOUNT OF BEATITUDES—the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.)—and back again to Capernaum. The Twelve Disciples chosen (Matt. x. 1-4; Luke vi. 12-16).
3. FROM CAPERNAUM TO NAIN, THROUGH THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY BACK TO CAPERNAUM.—The widow's son raised; message from John the Baptist; Jesus dines with Simon the Pharisee; makes a circuit in Galilee with the Twelve (Luke vii. 11-viii. 3).
4. FROM CAPERNAUM TO GERGESA AND BACK.—To the shore of the lake; parables of the kingdom; across the lake; storm stilled at Gergesa; the demoniac cured; back to Capernaum (Matt. xiii. 1-53, viii. 18-34; Mark iv. 1-v. 20; Luke viii. 4-18, 22-40).
5. FROM CAPERNAUM TO NAZARETH AND BACK. The second rejection at Nazareth; the mission of the Twelve; the news of the death of John the Baptist (Matt. xiii. 54-58, xiv. 1-12; Mark vi. 1-29; Luke ix. 1-9).

## iii. Year of opposition.

## 1. JOURNEYS OF FLIGHT IN GALILEE.

- (1) First journey of flight—across Sea of Galilee.
  - (a) From Capernaum to Plain of Butaiha. Feeding of 5000.
  - (b) Back to Galilee. Storm. Jesus walking on water. Land at Gennesaret (Mark vi. 30-53; Matt. xiv. 13-34; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-21).
- (2) Second journey of flight—coasts of Tyre and Sidon.
  - (a) From Capernaum and Bethsaida through north-west Galilee to Phœnician border—Syrophœnician woman.



- (*b*) Thence to Sidon, thence by Lebanon to upper springs of Jordan, down Jordan east bank to the Decapolis, on south-east shore of Sea of Galilee feeds 4000, back to Galilee to coast of Dalmanutha or Magadan (Mark vi. 24-viii. 10; Matt. xv. 21-39).
- (3) Third journey of flight—Cæsarea Philippi.
  - (*a*) Across the sea of Galilee to Bethsaida Julias. Blind man healed.
  - (*b*) Thence by east side of Jordan northwards to the source near Cæsarea Philippi. Peter's confession and first clear prediction of Passion on the way.
  - (*c*) Thence to the mountain range of Hermon—the transfiguration—the demoniac boy.
  - (*d*) Back through Galilee, crossing Jordan below Lake Huleh and down the west bank. On the road, second prediction of the Passion—to Capernaum (Mark viii. 13-ix. 33).

## 2. JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM.

- (1) Journey to Feast of Tabernacles.

Secretly by unfrequented and now unknown route—return to Galilee (John vii. 2-x. 21).

- (2) Last Journey to Jerusalem.

- (*a*) From Capernaum to Samaritan village (Ginnea)—repulsed, so to an unknown village probably within the Galilean border—there stays to send out the Seventy—thence to Perea by Bethabara and Bethshean ford (Luke ix. 51-x. 24).
- (*b*) Through Perea slowly—preaching, discussing with Pharisees, working miracles (Mark x. 1-31; Luke xi. 1-xiii. 35).
- (*c*) From Perea by Jericho ford, and by Jericho (parable of Good Samaritan) to Bethany and Jerusalem—The feast of dedication (Luke x. 25-42; John x. 22-38).

## 3. JOURNEYS OF FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM.

- (1) First flight from Jerusalem—to Perea.

- (*a*) Jews attempt to stone Jesus—He retires to Bethany beyond Jordan in the Perea—miracles and various parables (Luke xiv. 1-xvii. 10; John x. 39-42).
- (*b*) Message sent that Lazarus is ill—after delay Jesus goes back to Bethany—raises Lazarus (John xi. 1-46).

- (2) Second flight from Jerusalem—to Ephraim.

- (*a*) Sanhedrin resolves to kill Jesus—He goes to Ephraim and stays till the Passover approaches (John xi. 47-55).
- (*b*) From Ephraim across to Jordan valley—joins stream of pilgrims on west side of Jordan—through Jericho (blind Bartimæus) to Bethany, where our Lord resided during the Passion week (Mark x. 31-52 and xiv. 1-11; Matt. xx. 17-34; Luke xviii. 31-xix. 28).

## THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION.

The population of Palestine was but a small portion of the great Jewish people. Every conqueror had, according to the fashion of these early days, carried away captive some of its people, and settled them as colonists far from the Temple and its services; and the stern necessity of making a living had banished multitudes of Jews from their native land. In an epistle of Agrippa to Caligula, it is said that Jerusalem is the capital, not only of Judea, but of most countries, by reason of the numerous colonies which it has sent out, and who still regard the ancient Jewish city as their metropolis. In almost every part of the Roman empire Jewish colonies were to be found, and Jews swarmed in those Eastern lands which had not submitted to the Roman arms.

These Jews, though frequently possessing the privileges of citizenship, kept themselves rigidly apart from their pagan neighbours, and formed independent communities. In some cities, as in Alexandria, they were gathered into one political organization, governed by a Gerousia or Eldership, and by a committee of this eldership. In other places, as in Rome, they formed several distinct communities or synagogues, but everywhere they maintained their independence and seclusion. Their right of association was guaranteed by edict, and Judaism acquired such a legal standing as to be treated as a *religio licita* throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire.<sup>1</sup> This recognition included the two privileges of (1) administering their own funds, and (2) of exercising jurisdiction over their own members. The first privilege enabled the Jews not only to send to Jerusalem the yearly tribute enjoined by the Law, but permitted them to keep in touch, through tribute-paying and almsgiving, with the Judaism of Palestine. The second enabled them to take their own law with them wherever they went, and live as their forefathers had done, a separate people, though far from the Land of Promise. Cases were heard and judged in the local synagogues, and, where

<sup>1</sup> Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, vol. ii, p. 259.

need was, appeals were carried for final judgment to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

The service in these Synagogues of the Dispersion was conducted in Greek, and the Septuagint version of the Scripture was the one used. The common speech had its effect both on the Gentile community surrounding the Jewish synagogues, and also on the Jews themselves. The Hellenists, or Grecians, as the Jews of the Dispersion were called, could not maintain the same rigid exclusiveness as characterized the Judean Pharisees. They became insensibly more tolerant, and apt to be affected by the ideas and usages of Gentiles. On the other hand,—and this is what concerns us most,—the Gentiles brought into communication with Jews frequently became proselytes, or at least sympathizers with much that was in Judaism.

The Roman writers who refer to the Jews speak of them invariably either with hatred or with harsh contempt, but the opinion of the literary class is never to be taken as representing the true popular estimate of a religion. As a matter of fact, Judaism carried on a very successful propagandism among the nations subject to Rome, and made large numbers of proselytes. The lofty monotheism of the Old Testament impressed men and women, who were weary of the degradation of even the most refined paganism. The pure morality of Judaism, its frank confession of sin and sorrow in life, and its promises of deliverance, appealed to the deepest feelings of the human heart. Some of these Gentile inquirers became Jewish proselytes. Others were content to sympathize with the theology of Judaism without submitting to all its rites. Thus it happened that, in almost every large town in Asia Minor and in Greece, the synagogue was attended by men and women who, although Gentiles, feared and worshipped the God of Israel, and knew about the Messianic hope of the Jewish people. It was among these Gentiles that the Christian Church found its first converts, and it was for them that St. Luke wrote his Gospel.

## MIRACLES RECORDED BY LUKE.

<i>Jesus passes through the crowd at Nazareth,<sup>1</sup></i>	iv. 28.
Demoniac in synagogue at Capernaum,	iv. 33.
Cure of Peter's mother-in-law,	iv. 38.
<i>Draught of fishes,</i>	v. 1.
Leper cured,	v. 12.
Paralytic cured,	v. 18.
Man's withered hand cured,	vi. 6.
Centurion's servant cured,	vii. 1.
<i>Widow's son raised at Nain,</i>	vii. 11.
Tempest stilled,	viii. 22.
Demoniac of Gergesa cured,	viii. 26.
Jairus' daughter,	viii. 41.
Woman with issue of blood,	viii. 43.
Five thousand fed,	ix. 10.
Demoniac boy,	ix. 37.
Deaf and dumb demoniac cured,	xi. 14.
<i>Woman's infirmity cured,</i>	xiii. 11.
<i>Man's dropsy cured,</i>	xiv. 1.
Ten lepers cleansed,	xvii. 11.
Two blind men cured,	xviii. 35.
<i>Malchus' ear cured,</i>	xxii. 50.

## PARABLES RECORDED BY LUKE.

The new cloth and the old garment,	v. 36.
The new wine and the old bottles,	v. 37.
The house on the rock,	vi. 47-49.
<i>Two debtors,<sup>1</sup></i>	vii. 36-50.
Sower,	viii. 4-15.
Candle under a bushel,	viii. 16-18.
<i>Good Samaritan,</i>	x. 25-37.
<i>Friend at midnight,</i>	xi. 5-8.
<i>Rich fool,</i>	xii. 16-21.
<i>Servants watching,</i>	xii. 35-40.
<i>Steward,</i>	xii. 42-48.
<i>Barren fig tree,</i>	xiii. 6-9.

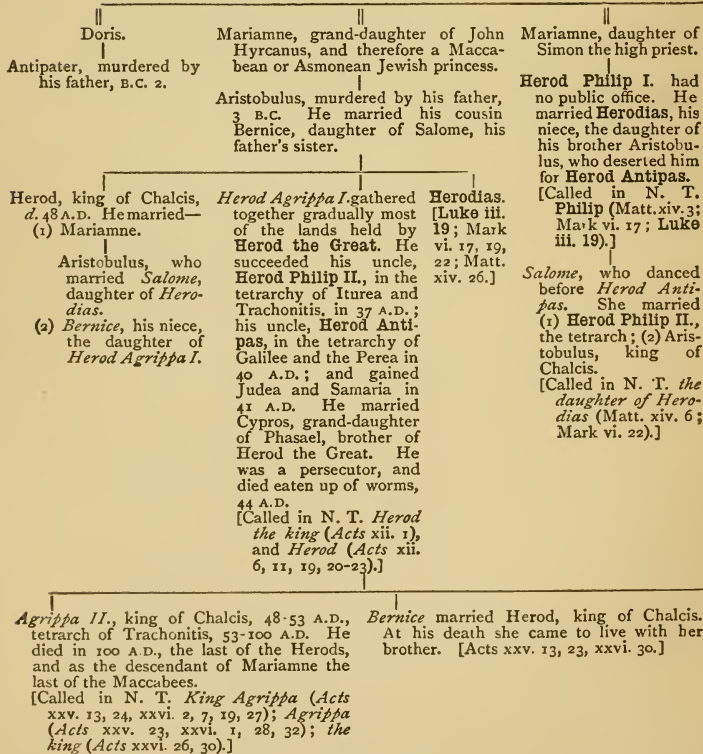
<sup>1</sup> Those in italics peculiar to Luke.

Mustard seed, . . . . .	xiii. 18, 19.
Leaven, . . . . .	xiii. 20, 21.
<i>Great supper</i> , . . . . .	xiv. 16-24.
<i>Tower and prudent king</i> , . . . . .	xiv. 28-33.
Lost sheep, . . . . .	xv. 3-7.
<i>Lost piece of money</i> , . . . . .	xv. 8-10.
<i>Prodigal son</i> , . . . . .	xv. 11-32.
<i>Dishonest steward</i> , . . . . .	xvi. 1-13.
<i>Rich man and Lazarus</i> , . . . . .	xvi. 19-31.
<i>Master and servant</i> , . . . . .	xvii. 7-10.
<i>Importunate widow</i> , . . . . .	xviii. 1-8.
<i>Pharisee and Publican</i> , . . . . .	xviii. 9-14.
<i>The pounds</i> , . . . . .	xix. 12-27.
Vineyard and husbandmen, . . . . .	xx. 9-16.
Sprouting fig tree, . . . . .	xxi. 29-31.

## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF

Antipas, an Idumean chief, made governor of Idumea under  
Antipater, at first confidential adviser of John Hyrcanus,

Phasael,  
Joint tetrarch with Herod of Judea, 41 B.C.



<sup>1</sup> This table contains only the principal members of the Herod family. The names

THE HEROD FAMILY.<sup>1</sup>

Jannæus, and confidential adviser of Queen Alexandra.

then made procurator of Judea by Julius Cæsar, 47 B.C.

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**Herod the Great,**  
 Joint tetrarch of Judea, 41 B.C. ; sole king, 36 B.C. ; died February or March, 1 B.C.  
 [Called in the New Testament **Herod the king** (Matt. ii. 1, 3; Luke i. 5);  
*Herod* (Matt. ii. 7, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22); *the king* (Matt. ii. 9).]  
 He married ten wives, among whom were—

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<p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Malthakè, a Samaritan.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p><b>Herod Antipas</b>, the tetrarch of Galilee and the Perea. He married—        (1) the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia;        (2) <b>Herodias</b>, the divorced wife of his brother <b>Herod Philip I.</b>, and his own niece.        He was deposed and banished 40 A.D.        [Called in N.T. <b>Herod the tetrarch</b> (Matt. xiv. 1; Luke iii. 1, 19, ix. 7; Acts xiii. 1); <b>Herod</b> (Matt. xiv. 3, 6; Mark vi. 16-22; Luke iii. 19, viii. 3, ix. 9, xxiii. 7, 8, 11, 12, 15; Acts iv. 27); the king (Matt. xiv. 9; Mark vi. 22, 25, 27); <i>King Herod</i> (Mark vi. 14).]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cleopatra of Jerusalem.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p><b>Herod Philip II.</b>, tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis or Gaulonitis. He built Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 13; Mark viii. 27) and Bethsaida Julias. He married <i>Salome</i>, who was at once his niece and his grand-niece, the daughter of his brother <b>Herod Philip I.</b>, and of <b>Herodias</b>, his niece.        [Called in N.T. <b>Philip</b>, tetrarch of Iturea, Luke iii. 1.]</p>
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*Drusilla* (Acts xxiv. 24) married (1) *Azizus*, king of Emesa;  
 (2) *Felix*, procurator of Judea (Acts xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3, 22, 24, 27).  
 |  
*Agrippa*, d. 79 A.D.

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mentioned in the New Testament are in italics; those mentioned in Luke, in black letters.





# THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE.

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CHAP. I. **1** FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which **2** are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered

## I. THE GOSPEL OF THE INFANCY AND BOYHOOD OF JESUS, I.-II.

### I. THE INTRODUCTION, I. 1-4.

**1. Forasmuch as.** An introduction, simple, modest, and concise, written with great care after the model of classical authors in pure, polished Greek, giving valuable hints regarding the way in which the Gospels came into existence.

*Many have taken in hand, etc.* *Many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fully established among us, even as they, who were eye-witnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word, delivered them unto us, etc.* These sentences tell us—(1) That the apostles, whose main work was to bear witness for Christ, communicated to the Christians of the first generation an oral gospel, which was a vivid representation of the purpose of salvation, as seen in the words, deeds, sufferings, death, and rising again of the Saviour; (2) that many Christians before Luke attempted to rearrange the facts contained in this oral gospel or apostolic tradition, which had been received from (1 Cor. xi. 23) the apostolic eye-witnesses, and which was kept guarded as a sacred trust (1 Tim. vi. 20) by the Church; (3) that Luke, without disparaging their attempts, proposed to himself the same task, and that his gospel was to be the work of one who had not the primary qualification of being an eye-witness of the deeds he narrated, but who had full opportunities for knowing the oral apostolic gospel, for testing the earlier attempts to reduce this to writing, and who, besides, could at every step in the narrative find means to test his authorities.<sup>1</sup>

**Many.** The probability is that these did not include the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, but we cannot tell,

**2. Delivered them unto us.** The same phrase is used by St. Paul when he speaks about the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23), and about the resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 3), and there as in the text it refers to the oral gospel of the apostles, which is called a *tradition* (2 Thess. ii. 15), that *which has been committed to the trust of Christians* (1 Tim. vi. 20), and the *good thing which*

<sup>1</sup> Compare Introduction to my *Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel*, pp. 1-26.

them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses,  
 3 and ministers of the word ; it seemed good to me also, having  
 had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to  
 4 write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that  
 thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou  
 hast been instructed.

5 THERE was, in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a  
*has been committed* to the Church (2 Tim. i. 14). This oral gospel entrusted  
 to the memory is now to be arranged in order and committed to writing.

**Eye-witnesses and ministers.** The apostles were men who had companied  
 with Jesus all the time that He went in and out among men, *beginning* from  
 the baptism of John on to the ascension (Acts i. 21, 22), and fifty days after  
 the crucifixion they became ministers through the gift of the Spirit at  
 Pentecost, which, filling them with the Holy Ghost, darted into them that  
 spiritual insight into the life and work of Christ which fitted them for the  
 apostolic ministry.

3. Having had a perfect understanding, etc. *Having traced the course  
 of all things accurately from their source:* the words imply following a course  
 of events step by step, or translating a course of instruction bit by bit into  
 action (2 Tim. iii. 10).

**From the very first.** *From their beginning or source.* Luke begins with  
 the birth of John, *i.e.* before the beginning of the life and long before the  
 beginning of the ministry of Jesus.

**In order.** Most critics have supposed this to mean *in chronological order* ;  
 and if we accept Rev. J. J. Halcombe's idea of a *displaced section* of St. Luke,  
 this meaning is probably the correct one ; but see notes on xi. 14.

**Most excellent Theophilus.** Nothing is known about Theophilus, not  
 even whether he was a real person. Godet, founding on the *Clementine  
 Recognitions* (!), a religious novel of the second century, supposes him to have  
 been a great lord residing in Antioch in Syria, whose slave Luke the Physician  
*may* have been, who *may* have freed his slave, to whom the gospel *may* have  
 been dedicated in order that the expense of preparing the first few copies might  
 be borne by a wealthy patron ; but this is pure conjecture. The title *most  
 excellent* denoted high official rank (Acts xxiii. 26, xxvi. 25).

4. Of those things wherein, etc. *Concerning the things which thou wast  
 taught by word of mouth.* The phrase is that from which *catechize* and  
*catechumen* come, and implies (1) oral teaching, and (2) the oral teaching  
 which was necessary before baptism. Hence the intention of the Gospel was  
 to give a full, accurate account of that vivid picture of the words and deeds  
 of Jesus, which was the oral gospel, and which was committed to memory by  
 Christian converts. Then, as now, men were more impressed by the facts of  
 Christ's life than by doctrine based on the facts.

## II. THE ANNUNCIATIONS, I. 5-56.

### 1. *Annunciation of John's Birth*, i. 5-25.

5. There was, etc. This chapter is called the *Protevangelium*, or Gospel  
 before Christ's birth. The narrative may have been learned from Mary, who  
 kept all these things in her heart.

Herod, King of Judea. Herod the Great, son of Antipater and founder

- certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia : and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was*
- 6 Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord
- 7 blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren ; and they both were *now* well stricken in years.
- 8 And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office
- 9 before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went

of the Herodian party. Antipater was an Idumean who had gained the confidence of John Hyrcanus, the last Maccabean prince, and was the virtual ruler of Palestine. Herod was from earliest manhood a bold and skilful warrior and a master of unscrupulous statecraft. From the first he set himself to win the throne of Palestine by submission to the Romans. When Julius Cæsar died, he purchased the friendship of his murderers ; when the conspirators were defeated at Philippi, he won over Antony to make him king of Judea ; and when Octavius became master of the Empire, he conciliated the new ruler. He married Mariamne, grand-daughter of John Hyrcanus, hoping to gild future usurpation by legitimate claims, and ruthlessly exterminated the Maccabean family. He introduced Roman customs, degraded the high-priesthood, but rebuilt the temple to conciliate the Jews. He died of the same loathsome disease which carried off his son Herod Antipas. See table of the Herodian family, pp. 38, 39.

A priest named Zacharias. "When God begins a new work, He does not scornfully break the instrument by which past work has been done. He took the reformer of the Mediæval Church from the seclusion of a convent, and He produces the man who was to introduce the world to the renovation prepared for it from the loins of a Jewish priest. The Temple was the cradle of the New Covenant" (Godet).

Of the course of Abia. In the time of David there were twenty-four priestly families (sixteen descendants from Eleazer, and eight from Ithamar, the two younger sons of Aaron), to whom the king distributed by lot the weekly service in the temple. Each family was called from this weekly service a course (1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19 ; 2 Chron. xxxi. 2). After the Babylonian exile only four of these families returned to Palestine, but these were subdivided into twenty-four to maintain the old number of the courses, and they took the old names (Neh. xiii. 30). The course of Abia or Abijah (1 Chron. xxiv. 10) was the eighth in order, and was a revived one (Neh. x. 7, xii. 4, 17).

Elisabeth. Elisheba (*one whose oath is by God*), the name of Aaron's wife. Priests could marry out of the tribe of Levi (Lev. xxi. 7), and the double Aaronic descent of John was therefore noteworthy.

6. Commandments and ordinances. The *moral laws* and *ceremonial rules* of the Pentateuch. Compare Gen. xxvi. 5 ; 2 Chron. xvii. 4 ; Rom. vii. 8-15 ; and Heb. ix. 1. The words include all the 248 positive and 365 negative precepts into which the Rabbins divided the Law.

7. Had no child. The want of children among the Jews was looked on as a mark of God's anger, and besides deprived a family of the glory of producing the *Deliverer*.

9. His lot was, etc. *His lot was to enter into the sanctuary of the Lord*

10 into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the  
 11 people were praying without at the time of incense. And  
 there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on  
 12 the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias  
 13 saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the  
 angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias : for thy prayer is  
 heard ; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou  
 14 shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and glad-  
 15 ness ; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be

*and burn incense.* To understand the scene, it is necessary to remember that twice a day, morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed on the altar of burnt-offering in the Court of the Priests. This was accompanied with burning of incense on the altar of incense, a small acacia table covered with gold (Ex. xxx. 1-7), which stood within the Holy Place, immediately in front of the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex. xxx. 6). The priest whose duty it was to burn incense entered the Holy Place in white robes with bare feet, and at a signal given by sound from the Court of the Priests he stood before the altar of incense, facing the veil which walled off the Holy of Holies, and therefore in the very presence of God (*before God*), and cast the incense on the golden altar. This was the highest and most coveted act of priestly service (Ex. xxx. 1-10 ; Num. xvi. 1-40), and a Jewish tradition says that no priest had ever offered incense more than once in his lifetime. It was the most solemn point in the priestly life, looked forward to with longing, looked back upon with awe. We can imagine the mingling of holy fear and holy faith in the mind of a devout priest like Zacharias, when he entered the Holy Place and cast incense on the altar ; it was the nearest approach to God possible to any one who was not the high priest.

10. The whole multitude . . . were praying. The incense was a symbol of prayer, and while the fragrant smoke rose in the Holy Place the prayers of the people went up to God from the Court of the Israelites. The two acts, material and symbolical, and spiritual and real, were the complement of each other.

11. An angel of the Lord. The first mention of angels in this gospel. For other appearances, see i. 26 (angel and Mary), ii. 9-13 (angels to the shepherds), xvi. 22 (angels and Lazarus), xvii. 43 (angel in Gethsemane), xxiv. 4, 23 (angels at the tomb).

12. He was troubled. Compare Mark xvi. 8 and Rev. i. 17.

13. Thy prayer is heard. The angel (1) reassures Zacharias, (2) promises a son in answer to prayer, (3) promises more than he had dared to ask, that this son will be great before God and the Forerunner of the Messiah. The whole structure of the passage implies that Zacharias had been specially praying for what he obtained ; and it helps us to see what prayer really is, when we observe that in answering the prayer of Zacharias God is fulfilling His purpose of grace towards His whole people. Mercies are doubly sweet that are answers to prayer.

15. He shall be great, etc. A description of the person of the promised son : (1) A powerful instrument in God's hand (Luke vii. 24-30), (2) who



great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink ; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this ? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God ; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And,

will specially dedicate himself to God by the Nazarite vow (Num. vi. 1-21), and that for life (Judg. xiii. 3-7 ; 1 Sam. i. 1-11).

Neither wine nor strong drink. Officiating priests were forbidden, while at their sacred work (Lev. x. 8-11), to use any intoxicating beverage, whether made from the grape (wine) or from any other material (strong drink). John was to be a priest from childhood, and to act as if he were always in God's presence.

He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. Compare Eph. v. 18 and Acts ii. 13, where the same contrast between a mechanical and a spiritual exhilaration is suggested ; the absence of the one is the capacity for the other.

16. He shall turn, etc. A description of the mission of the promised son. He is to bring back to God an estranged people, and, as a sign thereof, is to restore in his own person the long-lost prophetic order.

17. He shall go before Him. *He shall go before His face.* This verse contains four things : (1) John is to be the immediate Forerunner of the Messiah ; (2) he is to be the spiritualized Elijah, whose literal reappearance the people expected ; (3) he is to prepare the people in such a way that they will be disposed to receive the Messiah ; and (4) in doing this he will make the Children of Israel worthy descendants of the holy men of old, who longed to see the day of the Messiah ; and the children will be honoured by the restoration of the prophetic office in the person of John, and blessed in the appearance of the Christ. Compare Mal. iv. 1-6.

18. I am an old man. God grants more than we can conceive, and His promises, even when miraculously attested, seem unbelievable. Compare Gen. xvii. 17, Acts xii.

19. Gabriel. The Bible gives the names of two angels only : Gabriel (*the Hero of God*) and Michael (*who is like God?*). The former appears always to promote God's work on earth (Dan. viii. 16, ix. 21-23 ; Luke i. 26), to announce the restoration of Jerusalem, the birth of the Forerunner, the birth of Jesus. The latter appears to destroy all movements hostile to the kingdom of God (Dan. x. 13, 21, xii. 1 ; Jude 9 ; Rev. xii. 7). The one is the messenger of mercy, the other of wrath.

That stand in the presence of God. In an Eastern court the most honoured courtiers stand before the sovereign ; the others kneel, or fall prostrate. Compare Isa. lxiii. 9 ; Matt. xviii. 10.

To show thee these glad tidings. *To bring thee those good tidings, or to*

behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he  
 22 tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and  
 23 remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed  
 24 to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth  
 25 conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from  
 27 God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin

*preach this gospel.* Gabriel is the angel *evangelist*, and this message is the gospel before Christ.

20. *Thou shalt be dumb.* He got his sign, but it was a punishment; his faith was made strong, but faithlessness left its mark on the dumb man. No outburst of faith will get us entirely rid of the roots of former sins still in us.

22. *When he came out.* The people waited to see the man who had been face to face with God in the holy place, and to get his blessing; when he came forth at length he could only sign a blessing, and his manner showed that he had seen strange things in the holy place. "Aaron's priesthood was shortly to be silenced and set aside to make way for the bringing in of a better hope" (Matt. Henry).

*Vision.* Not a dream, but a vivid apparition in waking life and in daylight (Luke xxiv. 23; Acts xxvi. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 1).

23. *The days of his ministration.* The period when his course was on service in the Temple, from one Sabbath to another (2 Kings xi. 5).

24. *Hid herself,* with mingled feelings of womanly pride, tender gratitude to God, fused together with the exquisite shrinking joys of maternity, her woman's part in the salvation of Israel.

25. *To take away my reproach.* Her neighbours had nicknamed her "her that was barren" (v. 36). Compare Rachel (Gen. xxx. 23) and Hannah (1 Sam. i. 6-10).

## 2. *The Annunciation of Jesus' Birth, 26-38.*

26. *Galilee* was the richest and most populous part of Palestine, producing wheat, wine, and oil; so fertile that it had little or no meadow land, but was all under crop, and was tilled with the spade like a garden. The people crowded in numerous populous villages, engaged in agriculture, woollen manufactures, dyeing, weaving linen, fish-curing; were hardy, brave, and less bigoted than the Jews.

*Nazareth.* "In many respects there was divine fitness in this spot for the human growth of Jesus—'as a tender plant and a root out of the dry ground.' Apart from the obscurity and evil fame of Nazareth, . . . we may notice

espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of  
 28 David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. And the angel  
 came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly  
 favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among  
 29 women. And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his  
 saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this

(1) its *seclusion*. It lies in a narrow cleft in the limestone hills which form the boundary of Zebulun, entirely out of the ordinary roads of commerce, so that none could say that our Lord had learnt either from Gentiles or from Rabbis. (2) Its *beauty and peacefulness*. The flowers of Nazareth are famous, and the appearance of its inhabitants shows its healthiness. It was a home of humble peace and plenty. The fields of its green valley are fruitful, and the view from the hill which overshadows it is one of the loveliest and most historically striking in all Palestine" (Farrar).

27. **Esposued. Betrothed.** The ceremony of betrothal was a solemn one among the Jews, and meant much more than it does with us. It preceded marriage by about a year.

**Joseph.** The Scriptures do not tell us very much about Joseph. He was a just man of the house of David, his descent attested by a double descent in the public registers (John i. 45; Matt. i. 1-16, 20; Luke ii. 41, iii. 23); he lived at Nazareth, and was a carpenter. The decree of Augustus about taxation compelled him to reside for a time at Bethlehem. There Jesus was born, and Joseph was present at the adoration of the shepherds and of the wise men from the East. He fled with Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt, returned to Bethlehem on the death of Herod, but, fearing Archelaus, went back to Nazareth, where he carried on his trade as carpenter, assisted by Jesus. He took Jesus and Mary to Jerusalem twice, at least, in the boyhood of the Saviour, and in all probability died before the crucifixion (John xix. 27), if not before the beginning of the public ministry of the Lord (Mark vi. 3). Compare notes on viii. 19.

**Mary** (*Miriam* or *Marah*) was probably a descendant of David (i. 32, 69), and probably a cousin of Joseph. She was a kinswoman (*συγγενής*) of Elisabeth, was brought up in poverty, and had a sister of the same name who married Clopas (John xix. 25). She is mentioned six times only after the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus: (1) at the wedding at Cana (John ii. 1-5); (2) when with the brethren of the Lord she tried to speak to Jesus (Matt. xii. 46; Luke viii. 19; Mark iii. 21, 31); (3) when spoken about by the people of Nazareth (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 1-3); (4) when blessed by a woman (Luke xi. 27); (5) at the crucifixion (John xix. 25-27); and (6) after the ascension (Acts i. 14). Compare notes on i. 38, 46-56, ii. 22, iii. 23-38.

28. **Hail, highly favoured.** *Hail, thou that art endued with grace*, that art a special object of divine grace, or, thou that hast been accepted. The phrase is applied to believers in Eph. i. 6 (*accepted*). "Not a mother of grace, but a daughter" (Bengel).

**Blessed art thou among women.** Not a genuine part of the text, probably taken from ver. 42.

29. **She was troubled.** As Zacharias had been, as royal souls are when called to the presence of the divine.

30 should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for  
 31 thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt  
 conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call  
 32 his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the  
 Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto him  
 33 the throne of his father David : and he shall reign over the  
 house of Jacob for ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be  
 34 no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be,  
 35 seeing I know not a man ? And the angel answered and said  
 unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the  
 power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also  
 that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the

30. Thou hast found favour. *Thou hast found grace.*

31. Jesus. The Greek form of a very common Hebrew name, Joshua (Num. xiv. 6), Jehoshua (Num. xiii. 16), Jeshua (Ezra iii. 2), and meaning *the salvation of Jehovah*. Common as the name was, it had been more than once historically connected with the Messianic hopes of the people (Num. xiii. 16 ; Hag. i. 1 ; Zech. iii. 1), and was the cherished name of the Messiah that was to come (Matt. i. 21).

32. He shall be great. The promise grows in its utterance : (1) a Son ; (2) His name, signifying the highest blessing or sum of the gospel (Bengel) : "He Himself shall *save* His people *from their sins*" (Matt. i. 21) ; (3) His personal *greatness* ; (4) His divine kinship, *the Son of the Most High* ; (5) His future and everlasting sovereignty.

The Son of the Highest. *The Son of the Most High*. The best comment on this verse is furnished by the passages of Scripture in which we find the same prophecy (Mic. v. 4 ; 2 Sam. vii. 12 ; Isa. ix. 6, 7, xi. 1, 10, xvi. 5 ; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxx. 9 ; Ezek. xxxiv. 24 ; Hos. iii. 5 ; Ps. cxxii. 11), and its fulfilment (Phil. ii. 9-11 ; Rev. xxii. 16). *The Most High* is a frequent name for God in the Old Testament, and is frequently used (as in Gen. xiv. 18 ; Num. xxiv. 16) where there was a point of contact between Jews and Gentiles.

The throne of His father David. The form of the promise was the one most easily understood by a devout Jewish maiden, and would doubtless have been fulfilled in most literal fashion had not Jewish unbelief prevented "the transformed Jewish theocracy from opening its bosom to the heathen." Here in the transition period between old and new economies it was most natural, but the promise was fulfilled in another fashion than those who first heard it expected, and the kingdom of Israel became a spiritual kingdom of God.

33. Shall be no end. Dan. ii. 44 ; Ps. xlv. 6 ; Heb. i. 8 ; Rev. xi. 15.

34. How shall this be. The very inquiry implies faith. The young maiden—she can scarcely have been more than sixteen years old—has stronger trust than the old priest. She accepts, too, the foretaste of affliction ; for no mention was made of her marriage.

35. The Holy Ghost, the source of all creative life (Ps. civ. 30), who in the beginning brooded over the face of the deep and brought cosmos out of chaos, who still quickens and nourishes every spiritual impulse, and brings the new life out of the deadness of the sinful soul.



- 36 Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age : and this is the sixth  
 37 month with her, who was called barren. For with God  
 38 nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
- 39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill

The Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God—(1) because He was in the beginning with God, and was God, One of the Three Persons of the Trinity ; (2) because of His supernatural birth. The angel only partially discloses the mystery of the incarnation. *Son of God* is the distinctively New Testament name for Jesus. "The miraculous birth was only the negative condition of the spotless holiness of Jesus. Entering into human life in this way, He was placed in the normal condition of man before his fall, and put into a position to fulfil the career originally set before man, in which he was to advance from innocence to holiness. . . . But in order to exchange this possibility into a reality, Jesus had to exert every instant His own free will, and to devote Himself continually to the fulfilment of the task assigned Him, namely, 'the keeping of His Father's commandments'" (Godet).

36. *Thy cousin Elisabeth.* *Thy kinswoman Elisabeth.* Mary does not ask for a sign, but one that could not fail to be comforting is given her.

37. *Nothing shall be impossible.* "The laws of nature are not chains which the Divine Legislator has laid upon Himself ; they are threads which He holds in His hand, and which He shortens or lengthens at will" (Oosterzee). (Gen. xviii. 14 ; Matt. xix. 26 ; Jer. xxxii. 17.) The angel's reply to Mary is a burst of divine song.

38. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* "All disputation with God after His will is known arises from infidelity. There is not a more noble proof of faith than to captivate all the powers of our understanding and will to our Creator, and, without all questionings, to go blindfold whither He will lead us" (Bishop Hall). Mary's answer implies that she has felt in the message of the angel the first thrust of the sword that was to pierce her heart, the premonition of *her* Gethsemane time, when Joseph was minded to put her away privily ; but she accepts the greatest sacrifice that could be demanded of a maiden, and in so doing became the ideal heroine of Israel. Farrar suggestively contrasts the exquisite simplicity and delicacy of this passage with the account in the Apocryphal Gospels.

### 3. *Mary with Elisabeth, 39-56.*

#### a. *Elisabeth's Hymn of Praise, 39-45.*

39. *In those days . . . with haste.* Luke has omitted between the 38th and 39th verses what Matthew tells us in i. 18-19. The white lily of the annunciation had been stained with the heart's blood of the Virgin Mother, and in her agony she fled from Nazareth to Judea, heedless of the Jewish customs which prohibited such a journey to a betrothed maiden, anxious only to get to a house that might be a hiding-place, and to a woman who would "mother" her. The whole passage is a wonderful tribute to the womanly saintliness of the mother of the Baptist.

40 country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the  
 41 house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to  
 pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the  
 babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the  
 42 Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said,  
 Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of  
 43 thy womb. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my  
 44 Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of  
 thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my  
 45 womb for joy. And blessed *is* she that believed: for there  
 shall be a performance of those things which were told her  
 from the Lord.

46, 47 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my

**The hill country.** Palestine, west of the Jordan, lies in four parallel lines of very different formation: (1) The coast; (2) the maritime plain, broken only by the spur of Carmel; (3) the hill country—the mass of low, rounded hills which formed the main part of the Roman provinces of Judea and Samaria south of the intervening plain of Esdraelon and of Galilee north of it; and (4) the vale or deep dint of the Jordan valley. See Deut. i. 7, “in the *plain*, in the *hills*, in the *vale*, and in the south, and *by the seaside*.” . . . The specific meaning of the “hill country” is the elevated district of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. (Gen. xiv. 10; Num. xiii. 29; Josh. ix. 1, x. 40, xi. 16.) (Farrar.)

A city of Judah, perhaps Hebron, but more probably *Jutta* (Josh. xv. 55, xxi. 9, 16).

41. Filled with the Holy Ghost. Compare verse 15. Her hymn of praise is inspired; she had abandoned herself to the influence of the Spirit. The whole passage suggests how the highest spiritual influences spring from the mysterious depths of unconscious life.

42. Blessed *art* thou, *i.e.* blessed beyond all others (Song of Sol. i. 8; Ruth iii. 10).

43. The mother of my Lord. Elisabeth was inspired to utter what the angel of the annunciation had been sent to reveal, and prophetically recognised the incarnation.

45. Blessed *is* she that believed. Perhaps with reference to Zacharias, who had not believed. “Believing souls are blessed souls . . . the faithfulness of God is the blessedness of the faith of His saints” (Matt. Henry).

*b. Mary's Hymn of Thanksgiving—the “Magnificat,”* 46–56.

46. And Mary said. Mary's hymn of thanksgiving, called the *Magnificat*, from the Latin word for *doth magnify*, is almost “a mosaic of quotations” from the Old Testament, and early found entrance into the public song of the Church. It is a more lofty re-echo of the song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1–10). It may be divided into four strophes, which are connected with each other by a common thought or expression: (1) verses 46–48; (2) verses 48–50; (3) verses 50–53; (4) verses 54, 55. The poetic structure is expressed in the alternation of words and thoughts.

My soul doth magnify, etc. (1 Sam. ii. 1; Ps. xxxiv. 2, 3). The course

48 spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded  
 the low estate of his handmaiden : for, behold, from hence-  
 49 forth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that  
 is mighty hath done to me great things ; and holy *is* his name.  
 50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to  
 51 generation. He hath showed strength with his arm : he hath  
 52 scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He  
 hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them  
 53 of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things ;  
 54 and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his  
 55 servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy ; as he spake to

of thought in the first strophe is : (1) Mary's natural life (*the soul*), her personal emotions and affections as a woman and a mother, adore God, who is the Lord and Ruler ; (2) the diviner and loftier portion of her being (*the spirit*), the deepest spiritual depths of her nature, stirred by the presence of the Holy Spirit, rejoice to know God the Saviour ; (3) the God whom she magnifies is both the Lord, or *Master*, and the *Saviour* who has made her know His salvation in the promise of the annunciation and in her felt fulfilment of it ; (4) the thought of God the Saviour suggests the mercy or compassion of the Lord which is the transition from the first to the second strophe.

48. Low estate is the word translated *humiliation* in Acts viii. 33 ; there is a subtle parallel between Mary, Israel, and the Messiah.

For behold, etc. The course of thought in the second strophe (48-50) is : (1) God's mercy shown in regarding the humiliation of Mary, selecting her while in this low estate, and so honouring her that all generations shall felicitate her ; (2) the action of God has displayed (*a*) His power, (*b*) His holiness, (*c*) His mercy ; (3) the might of God has been displayed in the incarnation, and has laid hold on Mary the woman and the mother, while the holiness of God has been shown in the fact that the loftier part of her nature had been brought into immediate contact with supreme holiness, and that she had received a new revelation of the moral character of the Lord ; (4) the combined power and holiness of God, finding outcome in mercy, has for its object not only herself but all who fear Him, and thus her thoughts break through the limits of her personal experience and include others, Elisabeth and Zacharias, and then all pious Israelites.

50. His mercy, etc. The course of thought in the third strophe is : (1) God's mercy experienced by Mary is also the experience of all who fear God and are the true Israel ; (2) this mercy works out a great Messianic revolution, which completely reverses the human notions of greatness—(*a*) the *proud*, the *mighty*, the *rich*, all whom the world thinks exalted, are to be abased ; (*b*) the *poor*, those of *low degree*, and the *hungry*, are to be exalted ; (3) there is a triple contrast—(*a*) morally between the *proud* and the *poor* in spirit, (*b*) socially between the *mighty* and those of *low degree*, (*c*) physically between those who toil and pinch (*hungry*), and who are made to feel a physical dependence on God, and the *rich* who, in need of nothing, feel no dependence.

54. He hath holpen. In the last strophe this Messianic revolution, begun in the person of Mary, carried on in the world and society, is seen to be the fulfilment of Old Testament history and prophecy.

56 our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered ;  
 58 and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her  
 cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon  
 59 her ; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that  
 on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child ; and they  
 60 called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his  
 mother answered and said, Not so ; but he shall be called  
 61 John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred  
 62 that is called by this name. And they made signs to his  
 63 father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a  
 writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they  
 64 marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and  
 65 his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. And fear  
 came on all that dwelt round about them : and all these say-  
 ings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of

Verses 54, 55, should be translated :—

*He hath holpen Israel His servant,  
 That He might remember mercy  
 (As He spake unto our fathers.)  
 Toward Abraham and his seed for ever.*

The *Magnificat* stands between the Old Testament and the New, a mosaic of Old Testament quotations, and with quaint anticipations of the Beatitudes. It is interesting to read it in connection with the Song of Hannah and the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount.

### III. INFANCY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, I. 57–80.

#### 1. *Birth and Circumcision of John*, i. 57–66.

58. Her cousins. *Her kinsfolk*. The verse gives a picture of kindly Jewish home life : the birth of the child, the visits of the neighbours and of distant friends to the mother, and the sympathetic joy with her who had been called in reproach “the barren.”

Had showed great mercy. *Had magnified His mercy*. An echo of the *Magnificat*.

59. To circumcise the child. For circumcision ceremonies, comp. Gen. xvii. 12 ; Lev. xii. 3. Circumcision was the manifest admission of the child into the visible covenant relationship with God, and corresponded to our baptism. Relatives were invited to witness the ceremony at which the child received its name, and remained to a feast.

They called. *They would have called*.

63. A writing table. *A writing tablet*. Two pieces of wood, folding together with a hinge, and covered with a thin coating of wax. The pen (*stylus*) was a piece of metal, sharp at one end for writing, and flattened at the other for erasing.



66 Judea. And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost,  
68 and prophesied, saying, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel;  
69 for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised  
70 up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant  
71 David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which  
72 have been since the world began; that we should be saved  
73 from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;  
74 to perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember  
75 his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father  
76 Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being

66. What manner of child, etc. *What then shall this child be? For the hand*, etc. (Judg. ii. 15; 2 Chron. xxx. 12; Ezra vii. 9). The child was guided by God.

## 2. The Hymn of Zacharias—the Benedictus, 67–80.

67. Zacharias was filled, etc. The *Magnificat* is the link between Old Testament and New Testament songs of worship, and the *Benedictus* preserves the continuity between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. The hymn may be divided into—(1) the coming of the Messiah, 68–70; (2) His mission and work, 71–75; (3) the relation between the Messiah and the infant John, 76, 77; (4) the story of the Messianic advent and salvation 78, 79. Almost every phrase is taken from the Old Testament.

68. Blessed be the Lord, etc. *Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel: for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people*. God had been absent since the voice of prophecy had ended with Malachi, but He has now returned and made a ransom for His people. History, long at rest, resumes its march.

69. A horn of salvation (Ps. cxxxii. 17; Ezek. xxix. 21; 1 Sam. ii. 10). A common metaphor for power among agricultural people, who see the strength of a bull in its horns.

70. Since the world began. *Of old* (Gen. iii. 15, xx. 7).

71. That we should be saved, etc. This verse begins the description of the work of the Messiah, which is salvation. Ver. 70 should be read as a parenthesis (see Revised Version), and then the phrase *shall be saved* comes immediately after *horn of salvation*. The salvation is more particularly described in ver. 74. *The enemies* are foreign foes: *them that hate us*, home tyrants like the Herods.

72. Mercy . . . remember . . . oath. "This verse has been thought to contain a reference after the manner of the ancient prophets (Isa. viii. 3; Mic. i. 10–15) to the name of the speaker, of his wife, and of his child" (Plumptre): John or Jochanan = the Lord be *merciful*; Zacharias = whom the Lord *remembers*; Elisabeth = the *oath* of my God.

His holy covenant. The incarnation was the renewal of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. xv. 18). Comp. Gal. iii. 15–19.

73. The oath which He sware. Comp. Heb. vii. 20–22.

delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him  
 75 without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the  
 76 days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet  
 of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord  
 77 to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his  
 78 people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender  
 mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath  
 79 visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and *in*  
 the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
 80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the  
 deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

74. **Being delivered . . . might serve.** Political deliverance is looked at as a means to perfect religious service.

75. **In holiness and righteousness** (Eph. iv. 24; 1 Thess. ii. 10). *Holiness* towards God; *righteousness* or *justice* towards man: but the spheres overlap.

76. **And thou, child, etc.** *Yea, and thou, little child*, small as thou art (Ps. viii. 2). Jesus was the Son of the Highest (i. 32); John, His prophet.

**To prepare His ways.** Comp. Mal. iii. 1.

77. **To give knowledge of salvation.** The true meaning of salvation had been lost, and had to be restored ere the Messiah's work could take effect. It had come to mean temporal emancipation, not freedom from the guilt and power of sin. The preacher of repentance was the forerunner of the Saviour. John's baptism meant that Jews were as sinful as Gentiles, and needed to repent and to show their repentance (Acts v. 31).

78. **Through the tender mercy.** *Because of the heart (bowels) of mercy* (2 Cor. vii. 15; Phil. i. 8, ii. 1; Col. iii. 12). The Baptist's work had to be done, because the pity or compassion which moved the heart of God demanded it.

**Whereby the dayspring.** The imagery of vers. 78, 79, appears to be: "A caravan misses its way, and is lost in the desert; the unfortunate pilgrims, overtaken by night, are sitting down in the midst of their fearful darkness, expecting death: all at once a bright star rises in the horizon, and lights up the plain; the travellers, taking courage at this sight, arise, and by the light of this star find the road which leads them to the end of their journey" (Godet). Comp. Isa. ix. 2; Matt. iv. 16.

80. **Waxed strong in spirit** (1 Sam. ii. 26; Luke ii. 40, 52). "The Baptist was no Lamb of God. He was a wrestler with life, one to whom peace does not come easily, but only after a long struggle. His restlessness had driven him into the desert, where he had contended for years with thoughts he could not master, and from whence he uttered his startling alarms to the nation. He was among the dogs rather than among the lambs of the Shepherd" (*Ecce Homo*).

**In the deserts.** We have no means of filling in the brief outline of the Baptist's training for his ministry. The desert referred to is the wild barren region on the slope of the hill country of Judea down to the Dead Sea. It was a place of retirement for many contemplative minds, who in these days of oppression preferred to live hermit lives.

CHAP. II. 1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world  
2 should be taxed. (*And this taxing was first made when*  
3 *Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*) And all went to be taxed,  
4 every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from

#### IV. THE INFANCY OF JESUS, II. 1-52.

##### 1. *Birth in the Stable*, ii. 1-7.

1. Now it came to pass, etc. *Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the inhabited earth should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol themselves*, etc. This passage contains two difficulties, on each of which volumes have been written. It is said that there was no such imperial decree as Luke records, and that Quirinius (Cyrenius) was not governor of Syria till ten years after the date mentioned by Luke. Let us take each in its order.

1. *The imperial decree.*—Luke's statement is that Augustus ordered that a general census or complete set of statistical returns should be taken of the whole Roman empire; these returns did not necessarily imply taxation, but they were useful to the tax-gatherers, and were therefore disliked by the people. Luke is the only author who mentions this general decree, and therefore some critics have said that the Gospel narrative is erroneous. But (1) Luke has preserved for us many interesting facts which were declared to be errors until confirmed by archæological research (*e.g.* that the magistrates of Thessalonica were called *Politarchs*, Acts xvii. 6), and this among others; (2) the political records of the period have not been well preserved, and the silence of the historians is no proof that Luke has not preserved a fact well known at the time; (3) Tertullian and Justin Martyr appeal to census-lists made by Quirinius when he was first procurator, and bid the Romans search their own archives as to the fact, while Celsus and Porphyry, eager to find everything that could be said against the Gospel narratives, never think of questioning the statement; (4) there are traces of the existence of such a census as Luke mentions—(a) Augustus compiled a *Rationarium* of the Empire which must have been based on such a census, and this book, and its epitome the *Breviarium*, included the allied kingdoms, such as Palestine; (b) some such census may be the reason for several tumults which occurred in Palestine about this time, the origin of which has hitherto been unexplained.

2. *Quirinius and the government of Syria.*—Quirinius was certainly governor of Syria in A.D. 6, and then superintended a census which led to the revolt of Judas of Galilee, referred to by Luke in Acts v. 37, and some say that Luke has made an error of at least ten years in his statements. Various explanations have been given, but the simplest is that Quirinius was twice governor of Syria. Governors were changed very often, and it is certain that Quirinius was in Cilicia shortly before the birth of our Lord, and in a position that would naturally result in his promotion to the governorship of Syria.

3. *Every one to his own city.* The usual Roman method was to enrol

Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him

every one in his place of residence, but in deference to the feelings of the Jews men were enrolled in the place of their birth.

4. **Bethlehem** (House of Bread), one of the oldest towns in Palestine, anciently called *Ephrath* (*fruitful*), or *Ephratah* (Gen. xxxv. 16, xlvi. 7; Ruth i. 2, iv. 11; 1 Sam. xvii. 12; Ps. cxxxii. 6; Mic. v. 2), was a small and obscure town, about six miles from Jerusalem. There Rachel died (Gen. xxxv. 16); there Ruth and Boaz lived (Ruth i. 22); it was the city of Jesse, the father of David (1 Sam. xvii. 12), its only boast that it had given birth to David (John vii. 42).

**Of the house and lineage (family) of David.** "The humble condition of Joseph as a provincial carpenter in no way militates against this. Hillel, the great contemporary Rabbi, who also claimed to be a descendant of David, began life as a half-starved porter; and numbers of beggars in the East wear the green turban, which shows them to be undisputed descendants of Mohammed" (Farrar).

7. **She brought forth her first-born son.** It is somewhat difficult to fix the date of the birth of Christ; but the researches of Bosanquet and Lauth, published in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, are now almost universally accepted. These investigations have fixed, almost beyond a doubt, the year 3 before the Christian era as the date of the nativity. The data on which the computation is founded are—(1) the first rule of Quirinius (Cyrenius) in Syria (Luke ii. 2); (2) the accession of Tiberius, 14 A.D.; (3) the Paschal full moon at the time of the crucifixion, probably 33 A.D.; (4) the reign of Herod, which began in 36 B.C. and ended in 1 B.C. Founding on all these, Mr. J. W. Bosanquet has arranged the following chronological table of our Lord's life:—

Birth of Jesus, autumn, . . . . .	B.C.	3	
Jesus, one year old in autumn, . . . . .	B.C.	2	
Jesus, two years old in autumn, . . . . .	B.C.	1	
			Death of Herod in February or March, . . . . . B.C. 1
			(Shortly after the lunar eclipse, January 10th), . . . . . B.C. 1
Jesus, three years old in autumn, . . . . .	A.D.	1	
Jesus, twelve years old in autumn, . . . . .	A.D.	10	
Jesus, thirty years old in autumn, . . . . .	A.D.	28	
			The 15th year of Tiberius ended in August, . . . . . A.D. 29
Jesus, thirty-one years old in autumn, . . . . .	A.D.	29	
Compare note on Luke iii. 1, 23.			

**First-born son.** The word does not necessarily imply that Mary had other children. See note on viii. 19.

**Wrapped him in swaddling clothes.** Swathes of cloth were, after the fashion of the East, wrapped tightly round the whole body of the child, confining both arms and legs. Mary in her poverty had to do this herself.



in a manger ; because there was no room for them in the inn.

- 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in  
9 the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo,  
the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the  
Lord shone round about them ; and they were sore afraid.  
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not ; for, behold, I bring  
you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

**Laid him in a manger, etc.** Bethlehem was a small and obscure town, and its inn was merely a *khan*, a *caravanserai*, as distinguished from a hostelry (x. 34), with a landlord who looked after his guests. It was an enclosed space surrounded by open recesses, with paved floors raised a little above the level of the ground, which served as sleeping or resting chambers. The *khan* was crowded because of the *census*, and Mary and Joseph had to be content with a corner of the enclosed courtyard or to seek refuge in the stables. The stables at the *khan* of Bethlehem were, according to an old and in no way improbable tradition, in a limestone grotto, and there the travellers took shelter, and there Jesus was born. It is highly probable that Jesus was actually born in a limestone cave, over which the present Church of the Nativity has been built. The *khan* at Bethlehem was famous even in Jeremiah's time (*the inn of Chimham*) as the rendezvous of travellers to Egypt (Jer. xli. 17), and was probably built by the son of Barzillai (2 Sam. xix. 37, 38).

## 2. *The Angels and the Shepherds*, 8-20.

**8. In the same country.** The sheep intended for sacrifice in the Temple were usually pastured in the fields near Bethlehem, and these shepherds may have been watching them ; at all events, they were feeding their flocks in the same pastures from which David had been summoned to be anointed king over Israel.

**Keeping watch over their flock by night.** The tradition that Jesus was born at Christmas is not older than the fourth century, and that period of the year may have been fixed on for a church festival to displace the old pagan Saturnalia, but no argument can be drawn from this verse against the traditional time of Christ's birth. It is true that the pasture is richest in spring-time, but shepherds bivouacked (1 Sam. xvii. 34 ; John x. 10, 12) in winter in the fields in Palestine, and do so still. "We are not out of the way of divine visits, when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling, and abide with God in it" (Matt. Henry).

**9. And, lo, the angel, etc.** *And an angel of the Lord stood by them, etc.* The word denotes a sudden approach.

**The glory of the Lord.** The *Schekinah* (Acts xxvi. 13), the token of the divine presence in the Tabernacle and in the Temple (1 Kings viii. 10-11 ; Isa. vi. 1-3), appeared to poor men engaged in a mean occupation according to Jewish ideas.

**10. Fear not.** What the angel had said to Zacharias and to Mary (i. 13, 30).

**I bring you good tidings.** *I evangelize, I proclaim the Gospel.* Comp. Isa. lii. 7, lxi. 1 ; Rom. v. 11 ; 1 Pet. i. 8.

**To all people.** *To all the people* of Israel, and to other nations only through

11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour,  
 12 which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall* be a sign unto you ;  
 Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in  
 13 a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a mul-  
 14 titude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory  
 to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward  
 15 men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away  
 from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another,  
 Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which  
 is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.  
 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and  
 17 the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen *it*, they  
 made known abroad the saying which was told them concern-  
 18 ing this child. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those  
 19 things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary  
 20 kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. And

Israel ; but to the whole people, and therefore revealed to the poorest class first of all.

11. A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *A Saviour which is the anointed Lord, i.e. a Saviour who is the Messiah that is to come, the sacred and greater David* (Acts ii. 36 ; Phil. ii. 11 ; 2 Cor. iv. 5).

12. A sign unto you. The only significant thing is the contrast with human glory : the one child lying in the poorest cradle at Bethlehem that night was the Christ the Lord. Jesus most distinguished Himself by His humiliation.

13. A multitude of the heavenly host. Comp. Acts vii. 42 ; Rom. ix. 29 ; Jas. v. 4 ; Rev. v. 11, 12.

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men. *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men, in whom He is well pleased.* The first portion of the song is a familiar Jewish doxology (xix. 38) ; the whole song exhibits a triple parallelism of word and thought : (1) *Glory—God—in the highest heavens* ; (2) *Peace—to men who please God—on earth.* The song suggests that heaven and earth have been united, are in certain correspondence, and may be simultaneously described : as the halo of glory spread out from God on all sides in heaven, so the halo of peace will spread out from God's people on all sides on earth. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

15. The shepherds. *The men, the shepherds.* The angels had done their part, the men remained to do theirs ; God had revealed Himself, but men had to spread the revelation which they proceeded to verify.

16. Found. The word implies, *found after diligent seeking.*

17. Made known abroad. They preached the gospel which the angel had preached to them, having found the Christ meanwhile for themselves. Perhaps it was the rumours of this preaching that made Herod and his court so agitated when the Magi came with their news.

19. Mary kept all these things. She did not know all that they meant, but meditation is a help to memory. The mystery of the trust of an immortal

the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- 21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.  
22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem,  
23 to present *him* to the Lord ; (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called  
24 holy to the Lord ;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves,  
25 or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon ; and the same man *was*

life is always something for young mothers to ponder, but with Mary there were so many thoughts which she could not follow out to their ends, but only keep fast hold of the beginnings as they had come to her.

### 3. *The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple, 21-24.*

21. And when the eight days, etc. His parents were poor, far away from friends, and there is no pleasant picture of home life, as given in the account of the circumcision of John. "The circumcision of Christ had a profound bearing on His own work. For since 'he that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law' (Gal. v. 3), Jesus thus bore about with Him in His very flesh the seal of a voluntary obligation to do the whole law—by Him only possible in the flesh since the fall. And as He was 'made under the law' for no ends of His own, but only '*to redeem them that were under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons' (Gal. iv. 4, 5), the obedience to which His circumcision pledged Him was a *redeeming obedience*—that of a Saviour" (Brown and Fausset).

22. And when the days of her purification. After circumcision came two other legal ceremonies : (1) the *mother* had to be purified with her husband, and to this end had to present herself on the fortieth day after the birth, and after that period passed in seclusion, in the Temple, to offer the sacrifice of purification, which was a yearling lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or turtle-dove for a sin-offering ; but if the parents were very poor, a second pigeon or turtle-dove might be presented instead of the lamb (Lev. xii. 6-8) ; (2) the *child* had to be redeemed, when it was a first-born, from consecration to the Temple service by a sum of money, viz. five shekels (Ex. xiii. 2 ; Num. viii. 16, xviii. 15, 16). Vers. 22 and 23 refer to the child's ransom ; ver. 24 to the sacrifice for the mother, who had become ceremonially unclean at childbirth.

### 4. *The Songs of Simeon and Anna, 25-38.*

25. Simeon. Many have attempted to identify the Simeon of the text—(1) with Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel and the father of Gamaliel, who was president of the Sanhedrin, 13 A.D. ; (2) with an aged Essene, who was living after the death of Herod, and who rebuked Archelaus for marrying his

just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel : and  
 26 the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto  
 him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before  
 27 he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the  
 Spirit into the temple : and when the parents brought in the  
 28 child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then  
 took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,  
 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, accord-  
 30 ing to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
 31 which thou hast prepared before the face of all people ;  
 32 a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people

brother's widow. The name, however, was a very common one, and all that we really know of this Simeon is told us in this chapter.

**Just and devout.** Righteous in his dealings with men, and cautious and scrupulous in obeying the commands of the Jewish law. The word "devout" is used to describe pious *Jews* (Acts ii. 5, viii. 2, xxii. 12).

**For the consolation of Israel.** The phrase was common among the Jews to denote the Messiah, and was even uttered in oaths ("May I see the consolation of Israel"). It was suggested by Isa. xl. 1 and xlix. 13. Jesus called Himself the Comforter, and promised to send His disciples another Comforter. The word here rendered *consolation* corresponds to that translated *Comforter* in John xiv. 16, and *Advocate* in 1 John ii. 1. Many devout persons besides Simeon were waiting for the Messiah (Mark xv. 43).

26. It was revealed unto him. The message had come in answer to prayer. The word translated *revealed* here is rendered *warned* in Matt. ii. 12.

**The Lord's Christ.** *Jehovah's Anointed.*

27. When the parents, etc. It was one of the commonest occurrences in the Temple ; but Simeon, when he saw the poor parents with their baby, felt God saying to him, *This is the promised Messiah*, and understood the commonplace scene to be a fulfilment of prophecy (Mal. iii. 1).

28. Took Him in his arms. He undertook the priest's duty, and received the Child who was presented ; and it was fit that he should have done so. In that age of spiritual degeneracy true religion had forsaken the priests, and found refuge in obscure members of the Jewish Church, which produced in the persons of Simeon, Anna, and others, a species of spontaneous priesthood.

29. Lord, now lettest Thou, etc. *Now lettest Thou (now Thou art letting) Thy bondservant depart, O Master, according to Thy word, in peace.* This song of Simeon, called the *Nunc Dimittis*, was introduced into the Christian public worship as early as the sixth century. It is the thanksgiving of a slave at manumission uttered in phrases selected from Old Testament prophecy (Isa. xlii. 6, xlix. 6, lii. 10, lx. 1-3, lxi. 11). "Simeon represents himself under the image of a sentinel whom his master has placed in an elevated position, and charged to look for the appearance of a star, and then announce it to the world" (Godet).

30. Mine eyes have seen. The Babe is what he waited so long to see ; it is the salvation expected.

32. A light to lighten, etc. *A light for revelation* (for the unveiling of)



33 Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things  
 34 which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and  
 said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall  
 and rising again of many in Israel ; and for a sign which shall  
 35 be spoken against ; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own  
 soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.  
 36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of  
 Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser : she was of a great age, and  
 had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity ;  
 37 and she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years, which  
 departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings  
 38 and prayers night and day. And she, coming in that instant,  
 gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all  
 39 them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when  
 they had performed all things according to the law of the

*the Gentiles*, etc. Jesus and His salvation are to bring—(1) light or enlightenment to Gentiles, and (2) glory to the Jews ; for the light is kindled in the midst of Israel, and is its glory while it shines on the far-off Gentiles. It is the withdrawal of the veil spread over all nations (Isa. xxv. 7). Thus Simeon had a clearer view of the Messianic salvation than the apostles had even after Pentecost.

34. *For the fall and rising again.* *For the falling and rising* (Isa. viii. 14, 15, xxviii. 16. Compare Matt. xxi. 44 ; 2 Cor. ii. 16 ; 1 Pet. ii, 7, 8). Jesus is a stone which will trip up some—Pharisees, Sadducees, etc.; and on which others will set their feet strongly, and so rise to higher life.

*Which shall be spoken against.* Humiliation was to precede the glory ; His followers were to share the troubles of the Master (Acts xxviii. 22), and were to be everywhere spoken against.

35. *A sword shall pierce, etc.* The agony of the Virgin Mother is connected with the obloquy showered on Jesus. The Child was to bring out all the hidden venom concealed in the secret hearts of unbelieving Jews, and Mary's heart would be pierced again and again, when she saw what her Son endured from His rejection at Nazareth to His agony on the cross.

*Of many hearts.* *Out of many hearts.* The phrase usually denotes the revelation of evil, but it may be taken indifferently. The preaching of the gospel of Jesus brings out the latent good and the secret evil. It is a manifestation or revelation of hearts ; it discovers ourselves to ourselves.

36. *Anna.* All we know of Anna is contained in this passage. She was a widow called Anna, or Hannah ; she had lived seven years with her husband, and had been a widow for eighty-four years. Her father's name was Phanuel, or Penuel (Gen. xxxii. 30), and he was of the tribe of Asher. She had dedicated herself to Temple service so far as a woman could (2 Chron. xxxiv. 22), was present at all the stated hours of prayer, and fasted frequently (1 Tim. v. 5). She is called a prophetess, and was well known among a small circle of pious persons, who cherished expectations of the near coming of Christ, who were in the habit of meeting in the Temple.

39. *And when they had performed.* Luke omits the return to Beth-

Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom ; and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast  
42 of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they  
43 went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast. And  
when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child  
Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem ; and Joseph and his mother  
44 knew not *of it*. But they, supposing him to have been in the  
company, went a day's journey ; and they sought him among  
45 *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him  
not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

lehem, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and the massacre at Bethlehem.

40. And the child grew, etc. A short sketch of the childhood of Jesus. *He grew* physically, waxed strong (omit *in spirit*), being filled with wisdom. The words describe a perfectly natural human growth, and yet the presence of divine wisdom.

#### 5. *Visit to the Temple, 42-52.*

41. Went to Jerusalem. The law of Moses commanded all male Jews to attend at Jerusalem at the three feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Ex. xxiii. 17 ; Deut. xvi. 16) ; but this custom had long fallen into abeyance, and it was a mark of devout living to go up once a year. The narrative brings out the piety of Joseph and Mary : (1) they made a *yearly* pilgrimage ; (2) Mary went with her husband, for only men were enjoined by the law to go, and the women who went were very devout ; (3) they spent the whole seven days of the feast at Jerusalem—*fulfilling the days*.

42. When he was twelve years old. At *three* a Jewish boy began to wear the fringed garment (Num. xv. 38-41 ; Deut. xxii. 12), and was educated till *five* by his mother. At *five* he was set to learn the law, the creed of Deut. vi. 4, and the Hallel in Ps. cxiv.-cxviii., cxxxvi. ; during this period his father was supposed to be responsible for him. "On his son's thirteenth birthday his father may say, Blessed be He who has made me free from the burden of my son's sins." On this day the father brought the boy to the synagogue on the "Sabbath of Phylacteries," and presented him with phylacteries, which the son thenceforth wore at the recital of his daily prayer. The boy then became a visible member of the Jewish Church, and was called "a son of the law." Jesus had formerly seen His parents go yearly to Jerusalem, leaving Him at home ; now He went up with them for the first time. It was His first Communion season.

43. The child Jesus tarried. The people from Galilee journeyed together in large companies. During the seven days Jesus must have been continually in the Temple with the wise men there, and on the eighth He naturally went back to hear more of their wonderful discourses ; his parents as naturally supposed that He had started with the other youths, and did not miss Him till the large company halted for the night at the end of the first stage, probably at Beeroth, six miles north of Jerusalem. The word *child* should be *boy* or *youth*.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing  
 47 them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him  
 48 were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed : and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? behold, thy  
 49 father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me ? wist ye not that I must  
 50 be about my Father's business ? And they understood not

46. After three days. *On the third day.* One day journeying the first stage towards Galilee ; one day searching among the caravan and at Jerusalem ; one day finding Him in the Temple.

Sitting in the midst of the doctors, etc. The best-known teachers of the day, among them Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, and others ; perhaps Saul of Tarsus a fellow-pupil. Three rooms in the Temple were set apart for the members of the Sanhedrin, in which to receive their pupils. Jesus sat with the other pupils. The instruction was catechetical, and disciples were encouraged to ask questions of the masters. " I have learned much from the Rabbis my masters ; I have learned more from the Rabbis my colleagues ; I have learnt most of all from my disciples."

47. Astonished at His understanding. " His questions must have breathed a far purer and higher atmosphere of truth than that of the strife of words of which rabbinical controversy consisted ; and this, doubtless, was the cause of the astonishment they evoked " (Stock).

48. They were amazed. Quiet country people from Galilee held these Jerusalem Rabbis in high esteem ; and Mary, notwithstanding the sayings which she kept in her heart, could not help feeling surprise when the quiet, reserved Son did His first deed alone. It is always a shock to a parent to know that his child is not himself over again ; and not all a mother's aspirations can prevent the feeling of the wrench that the first deliberate independent act produces.

Thy father and I. The words tell us of the wise reticence of the home life in Galilee. Mary had never told the boy the secret of His life, but had left that in the hands of God. How surprised she must have been when Jesus' answer told her that He knew all !

49. That I must be about my Father's business. *That I must be in my Father's house.* These are the first recorded words of Jesus (His last words are recorded in Acts i. 7, 8) in answer to His mother's reproach for causing her weary search after Him, and the answer naturally dwells on the place where He was, rather than on the work in which He was engaged. But the interest in the words lies in the phrase, *my Father's*. It is as if He had said, " You have called me Son, and I acknowledge the relationship ; you have called Joseph my father : that relationship I disown ; my own, my only Father is He in whose house you have now found me, whose will I came on earth to do ; about whose matters I must constantly, and shall now, henceforth and for ever be engaged " (Hanna). The answer is the first word of the Eternal Spirit in the human spirit of the person of the God-Man.

50. They understood not the saying. Jesus was constantly misunderstood, or not understood at all (Luke ix. 45, xviii. 34 ; Mark ix. 32 ; John x. 6, i.



51 the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.  
52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

CHAP. III. 1 Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius

10); and yet Joseph and Mary had both intimations that the boy was the Christ; and we can imagine both at Nazareth, "each with a reticent consciousness of the greatness of the Life committed to their charge; each at times half losing count of the true measure of that greatness in the familiarity of daily intercourse" (Plumptre).

51. And He went down with them. This incident of Jesus in the Temple is the one ray of light which pierces the darkness which enshrouds the thirty years of His earthly life; "the solitary flowerlet out of the wonderful enclosed garden of the thirty years, plucked precisely there where the swollen bud at a *distinctive crisis* bursts into flower."

And was subject unto them. Farrar remarks that with the exception of these two verses the Gospels preserve but one single word to throw light on the life of our Lord between His infancy and His baptism, and that word is *carpenter*. "They show—(1) that our Lord's life was spent in *poverty*, not in pauperism; (2) that He sanctified labour as a pure and noble thing; (3) that God looks on the heart, and that the dignity or humility, the fame or obscurity of the outer lot is of no moment in His eyes."

52. And Jesus increased, etc. How the Godhead dawned on the growing humanity must be for ever a mystery. What we do know is that the Child Jesus was as really God as the Man Jesus. "The divinity that dwelt in Him from His conception manifested itself to His humanity by degrees, in proportion to its capacity" (Matt. Henry). This incident disproves the Unitarian idea that Jesus was a man who gradually came into such close communion with God that He may be called divine, or that the Divine Son descended on the human Jesus at His baptism.

## II. THE PREPARATION AND YEAR OF QUIET WORK IN JUDEA AND GALILEE, III. 1—IV. 13.

### I. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, III. 1—20.

1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, etc. The fifteenth year of Tiberius ended in August 29 A.D., and Jesus was about *thirty years* of age between autumn A.D. 28 and autumn A.D. 29. From this Mr. Bosanquet concludes that—

			The baptism of Jesus took place in
			May or June, . . . . . A.D. 29
Jesus thirty-two years old in . . . . . A.D. 30			First Passover, April, . . . . . A.D. 30
Jesus thirty-three years old in . . . . . A.D. 31			Second Passover, April, . . . . . A.D. 31
Jesus thirty-four years old in . . . . . A.D. 32			Third Passover, April, . . . . . A.D. 32
Jesus, <i>about</i> thirty-four, in April, . . . . . A.D. 33			The crucifixion on April 3rd (old style) at the full moon on Friday, . . . . . A.D. 33

Tiberius Cæsar, successor to Augustus, an able but sullen and suspicious

Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias

ruler, and latterly a gloomy tyrant. Herod Antipas paid him slavish deference, and built *Tiberias*, his Galilean capital, in his honour, the town which gave rise to the name, *Sea of Tiberias*.

**Pontius Pilate.** Herod the Great's kingdom was divided at his death, and Judea had been a Roman province for twenty years when John the Baptist appeared. It was governed by a Roman procurator under the governor of Syria. Pilate, a Roman knight, had been made the sixth procurator under Tiberius, and succeeded Valerius Gratus in 26 A.D. His headquarters were at Cæsarea, on the coast (Acts xxiii. 23). He had a cohort for a bodyguard (Matt. xxvii. 27). As a Roman judge, he sat on a portable tribunal, or *Bema*, placed on a tessellated pavement (*Gabbatha*, John xix. 13). At the great festivals he came up to Jerusalem; he had been a rapacious governor (Luke xiii. 1, 2), who could not afford to be accused to Cæsar, and who had more than once been rebuked by the suspicious tyrant who ruled at Rome. His position with regard to the tetrarchs was not unlike that of a governor of an Indian province to the dependent native princes.

**Herod.** *Herod Antipas*, son of Herod the Great by Malthace, a Samaritan, and appointed by him in his last will "Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea." He married—(1) a daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia Petrea; then (2) his niece, Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Herod Philip. His marriage with Herodias was the occasion of his war with, and defeat at the hands of Aretas. Instigated by Herodias, he went to Rome to gain the title of king, but fell under the suspicion of the Emperor Caligula, and was banished to Lyons, and died in exile.

**Tetrarch** means the ruler of a fourth part of a kingdom, but was used to denote any tributary prince to whom the title *king* had not been given. Herod was called *king* by courtesy (Mark vi. 14).

**His brother Philip.** *Herod Philip*, the best of the sons of Herod the Great, received as his government "Batanea, Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, and some parts about Jamnia" (Josephus), with the title of Tetrarch. His rule was just and moderate. He attended to the duties of his province, and kept himself free from the intrigues of the Herodian family. He built a new city on the site of Paneas, and called it Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 13), and rebuilt Bethsaida, calling it Julias. He married Salome, daughter of his brother Herod Philip and Herodias. He died childless, and his dominions were added to the Roman province of Syria. When our Lord crossed the Sea of Galilee, He left the lands of Herod Antipas and entered those of Herod Philip.

**Iturea, and the region of Trachonitis.** *Iturea* (from Jetur, son of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 15, 16) lay at the base of Hermon, and was full of hilly fastnesses, while its inhabitants were fierce marauding clans. *Trachonitis* was the ancient kingdom of Og, the Argob of Deut. iii. 14. It lay south of Iturea, and like it had been conquered by Augustus and given to Herod the Great.

**Lysanias.** The name of several rulers of Chalcis on the eastern slope of Antilibanus, whose capital seems to have been Baalbek. It was once

2 the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John, the son of  
3 Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the

asserted that Luke must have been in error in mentioning Lysanias, but inscriptions at Baalbek show that he is probably adding an interesting historical fact.

**Abilene.** A district called after its capital town, Abila, about eighteen miles from Damascus.

2. **Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests.** *In the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.* According to Mosaic law, there could only be one high priest, and he held office for life; but Herod had degraded the high-priesthood, and Roman governors made and unmade high priests at their pleasure. *Annas*, or *Hanan*, son of Seth, had been deprived in 14 A.D., and his son-in-law, Joseph Caiaphas, was the fourth high priest since his deposition. According to strict Jewish law, Annas, who had been deposed by the governor Valerius Gratus, was still high priest, and he was at the head of that party of Sadducees who contrived to keep in favour with the Roman governor and practically rule the nation. He was the most astute man of his time, the real political chief of the Jews, and the determined opponent of the Pharisees. Hence in the Talmud he is loaded with opprobrious names. He lived to see five sons and a son-in-law high priests, and for nearly fifty years enjoyed the real power of the high-priesthood.

*Joseph Caiaphas*, a Sadducee like his father-in-law, equally astute, unscrupulous, and unpatriotic, had consented to become high priest on the terms the Romans allowed. He became their pliant tool, and was used by them as the Greek patriarchs of Constantinople are used by the Turks, to keep their countrymen in firmer thralldom.

**The word of the Lord came to John . . . in the wilderness.** We know as little of the thirty years of John's life as of the like period of the life of Jesus. He had buried himself in the rocky solitudes of the wild regions which lay near his birth-place, skirting the north-western shores of the Dead Sea. "Through the loopholes of retreat we can well imagine the Baptist busily scanning the state of that community upon which he was to act. When he stepped forth from his retirement, and men of all kinds and classes gathered round him, he did not need any one to tell him who the Pharisees, or the Sadducees, or the publicans were, or what were their peculiar and distinctive faults" (Hanna). *The word of the Lord came*, the old prophetic call.

3. **Into all the country about Jordan.** Luke describes John coming forth to accomplish his mission; the other evangelists describe the people going to him. His work was mainly confined to the Arabah or Jordan Valley, from Bethabara at the Bethshean ford in the north to the Jericho ford in the south. "The Jordan now seemed to have met with its fit purpose. It was the one river of Palestine, sacred in its recollections, abundant in its waters; and yet at the same time a river not of cities but of the wilderness, the scene of the preaching of those who dwelt not in king's palaces nor wore soft clothing. On the banks of the rushing stream the multitudes gathered: the priests and scribes from Jerusalem down the pass of Adummim; the publicans from Jericho in the south, and from the Lake of Gennesareth in the north; the soldiers on their way from Damascus to Petra, through the Ghor, in the war with the Arab chief Hareth (Aretas); the peasants from Galilee,

country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance  
 4 for the remission of sins ; as it is written in the book of the  
 words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying  
 in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his  
 5 paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain  
 and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made  
 6 straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth ; and all  
 7 flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the  
 multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O genera-

with One from Nazareth, through the opening of the plain of Esdraelon. The tall reeds or canes in the jungle waved, shaken by the wind ; the pebbles of the bare clay hills lay around, to which the Baptist pointed as capable of being transformed into the children of Abraham ; at their feet rushed the refreshing stream of the never-failing river " (Stanley).

Preaching the baptism of repentance, etc. This baptism of John's was an entirely new rite, and highly significant. The Jews were accustomed to ablution as the outward sign of inward purification. It was part of the consecration of priests (Ex. xxix. 4 ; Lev. viii. 6), and of the purification of lepers and other unclean persons, and was perhaps one of the forms in which heathens were admitted as proselytes to Judaism ; but John made it a universal rite. Pharisees had to submit to what they demanded from lepers and heathens ; publicans were admitted to a share in what had formed part of the consecration of priests. John thus reduced Jew and Gentile to the same level of sin, with the same need of repentance and remission. The first word of his ministry was, Repent : his baptism was for those who had repented ; it foretold the purification of mind and heart which comes from the washing away of our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ ; on the part of man it was a declaration of sin renounced ; on the part of God, of sin forgiven. "The design of the gospel which had now begun was to make men devout and pious, holy and heavenly, humble and meek, . . . and good in every relation, who had been much otherwise, and this is *to repent*" (Matt. Henry).

4. Esaias the prophet, Isa. xl. 3-5.

The voice of one crying, etc. John compares himself to a *pioneer* sent before a king to make a road through wood, morass, and rocks, to make the winding paths straight, smooth, and wide. Compare *Commentary on Mark*, p. 66 (Isa. xxxv. 1-10). The pride of the Pharisees, the moral and religious indifference of the Sadducees, the frauds of the publicans, the sinful habits of the people, must all be levelled to the ground.

6. And all flesh shall see. Luke, writing for Gentile Christians, is the only evangelist who adds these words of Isaiah.

7. To the multitude, etc. *To the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him. Ye offspring of vipers* ; the phrase, Matthew tells us, was addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. iii. 7), and was applied by Jesus to the same classes at the close of His ministry (Matt. xxiii. 33). "It described the venomous hypocrisy which turned religion itself into a vice, and hid a deadly malice under the glittering semblance of a zeal for orthodoxy" (Farrar). John compares these men who come to his baptism in order by another ceremony to ensure entrance into the kingdom



tion of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to  
 8 come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and  
 begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our*  
 father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones  
 9 to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe  
 is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which  
 bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the  
 10 fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do  
 11 then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two  
 coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath  
 12 meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be  
 baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

of heaven to *broods of serpents*, and opposes this phrase to *children of Abraham* (John viii. 37-44).

Who hath warned you, etc. The context implies that they came for baptism without repentance, hoping to receive it, not because of change of heart and life, but as a privilege due to their birth as children of Abraham. John asserted what the old prophets taught (Isa. xlviii. 2; Jer. vii. 3, 4; Mic. iii. 11); what Jesus afterwards said (Matt. viii. 11, 12); what Peter (1 Pet. ii. 10) and Paul spent their lives in teaching (Rom. ix. 6, 7; Gal. iii. 29, vi. 15).

8. Of these stones, pointing to the boulders in the clay slopes, or to the water-worn stones in the Jordan course. "He who could make Adam from the clay could make sons of Abraham from the stones" (Bengel).

9. The axe is laid to the root of the tree, *i.e.* of the barren tree which does not bring forth fruit (ver. 8). John adopts a common symbol in Old Testament prophecy (Isa. v. 1-7; Jer. ii. 21, xi. 16), an orchard full of barren trees, fit only for cutting down into firewood. The rulers could not stand such plain speaking (Luke vii. 30; Matt. xxi. 25; John i. 19).

10. And the people asked him, etc. *And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do?* John's sermon, like all true sermons, had pierced their hearts. The man was in earnest, and made them in earnest too (compare Acts ii. 37, xvi. 30), and they came crowding round him after his address to get personal speech of the preacher, and to ask, not, What shall this man do? but, What must I do?

11. He that hath two coats, etc. John answers as Jesus and His apostles frequently did afterwards (Mark x. 21; 2 Cor. viii. 13-15; James ii. 15-17; 1 John iii. 17). He laid bare the sore of selfishness which was ruining the moral life of Palestine.

12. The publicans. *Tax-gatherers*. Publican is a Latin word, meaning—(1) the great officers who farmed the Roman revenue, and paid into the *public* treasury the sum agreed upon by contract with the government. They sublet the tax-gathering to agents, who were also bound by contract to pay a certain amount of money. These agents engaged (2) local officers, the *publicans* of Scripture, to collect the dues. They were chosen from the native population, that they might know the ways of the people, and generally oppressed and fleeced the tax-paying population. They had to pay a definite sum to their superior officers, and whatever more they could squeeze out of the people

- 13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is  
 14 appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him,  
 saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them,  
 Do violence to no man, neither accuse *any* falsely; and be  
 content with your wages.
- 15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused  
 in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;  
 16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you  
 with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of  
 whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize  
 17 you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan *is* in his

belonged to themselves. The Turkish government has inherited this odious fiscal system. These tax-gatherers were hated all over the Roman empire. Theocritus said that the worst kind of wild beasts were "bears and lions on the mountains, publicans and pettifoggers in the cities." Suidas says that the life of the publican is "unrestrained plunder, unblushing greed, unreasonable pettifogging, shameless business." In Palestine they were doubly hated. It was a common saying among the Jews, that "vows made to thieves, murderers, and publicans might be broken." John warns them against their besetting temptation.

14. *Soldiers of Herod Antipas*, Stanley thinks, but probably erroneously, on the march to fight against Hareth or Aretas, chief of Arabia Petrea.

*Do violence, etc.* John attacks the peculiar temptations of a soldier's life in such a country as Palestine was: (1) violence used to extort money or provisions; (2) acting as *informers* against the rich; (3) mutinying for increase of pay. His preaching was unique: (1) he never claims direct divine authority, nor uses the old prophetic word, "Thus saith the Lord," and yet he was prophet-like in his ascetic dress, and was received as a prophet; (2) he pointed to no sign, and performed no miracle, and yet he compelled crowds to hear him; (3) he was absolutely fearless, and made no distinction of persons; (4) he had a marvellous insight into human nature, sympathy with it, and hence his preaching was intensely practical.

15. *As the people were in expectation.* This new prophet increased the hopes of deliverance; they made inquiries about his earlier history; they must have heard about Zacharias and the Annunciation in the Temple. Then the mysterious whisper went round that this was the Christ. None dared ask the stern prophet, until at length the rumour became of national importance, and a deputation from the Sanhedrin waited upon him (John i. 19).

16. *Latchet of whose shoes.* The *latchet* was the thong fastening the sandal to the foot—our shoe-lace. The sandals of great persons were fastened and untied by the inferior slaves, whose duty it also was to pour water on the feet. Hence the significance of Jesus' act (John xiii. 4, 5), and the refusal of Peter to permit Jesus to condescend so far.

*With the Holy Ghost, etc.* *In the Holy Ghost, etc.* The preposition in Hellenistic Greek may mean—(1) the instrument, or (2) the surrounding influence or element in which an act takes place. Hence the phrase may mean, by means of, or influenced or surrounded by the Holy Ghost. John's contrast of himself with Jesus implies that Jesus could search the heart in a

hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner ; but the chaff he will burn with fire  
 18 unquenchable. And many other things, in *his* exhortation, preached he unto the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod  
 20 had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was

way that His Forerunner could not do ; He could penetrate within, beyond the sphere of material external life, to the heart and to the spirit ; He could act on man's spirit through His Spirit, and bestow on man the heavenly influence needed to purify the heart and the life. This baptism of the Spirit, predicted by John, had been foretold by earlier prophets, by Isaiah (xliv. 3), and by Joel (ii. 28) ; it was visibly fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts i. 5, ii. 3), and in the later outpourings after baptism (Acts xi. 15, 16) ; it is continually being fulfilled without external manifestations in all Christians, when they experience that peace in believing, and learn to live that life of new obedience, which are among the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 11, xii. 13).

17. And He will thoroughly purge, etc. *Thoroughly to cleanse His threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into His garner.* The metaphor is taken from Eastern agricultural life. The sheaves of corn were thrown on to a large area of hardened earth (*threshing-floor*), heavy oxen were marched up and down over the sheaves (Deut. xxv. 4), the straw was pulled away, and then with a large wooden shovel (*fan*) the husbandman threw the mingled chaff and grain into the air ; the grain fell down again, and the chaff was blown to the side, to be swept up and burnt, while the grain was gathered and stored in the granary (garner) or barn (Matt. xiii. 30). The Messiah is to be the one who separates (Matt. xiii. 30 ; 1 John ii. 19). The metaphor was a very common one (Ps. i. 4, xxxv. 5 ; Isa. xvii. 13, xxix. 5 ; Jer. xv. 7, etc.).

18. Many other things. Compare John i. 29-34, iii. 27-36.

19. Herod the tetrarch being reprov'd. An anticipation of the Baptist's later history. Compare Mark vi. 17-20 ; Matt. xiv. 3-5. Herod, crafty, sensual, and superstitious, had, in defiance of law human and divine (Lev. xviii. 16, xx. 21), seduced his brother Philip Herod's wife, Herodias, who was also his own niece, and had married her (see Table of Herods, pp. 38, 39), and, when solemnly rebuked by the Baptist, imprisoned John in the gloomy stronghold of Machor or Machærus on the north shore of the Dead Sea.

## II. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS, 21, 22.

21. Jesus also being baptized. Luke's short account must be supplemented from Matthew and Mark. Combining the three narratives, we find—(1) That Jesus came at the close of a baptismal service, when the people had gone, and that His baptism was almost private (Luke) ; (2) that John was unwilling to baptize Jesus, and was constrained thereto after conversation with the Lord (Matthew) ; (3) that Jesus went down into the river (Mark) ;



22 opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son*

(4) that after baptism Jesus prayed, and that during His prayer He got the divine attestation of His Sonship (Luke); (5) that Jesus was the first to see the heavens cleft and the Spirit descending (Mark); (6) and that the Spirit descended in bodily shape (Luke). The baptism of Jesus took place, probably, at the old ford of Succoth. Jesus, without sins to be confessed, repented of, and pardoned, by this act made himself one with the people whom He had come to save. He was baptized for the reason that He had been circumcised, that He might observe all the requirements of the Law, which He came not to destroy, but to fulfil (Matt. iii. 15). "It was to Him a baptism of sympathy, a baptism of approval, a stooping of the divine so as to take up its own laws and exemplify its own purposes" (Parker).

**Praying.** The Evangelists frequently call attention to the prayers of Jesus: (1) at His baptism (Luke iii. 21); (2) after a night of toil in healing (Mark i. 35); (3) after a day of severe toil (Luke v. 16); (4) before choosing the apostles (Luke vi. 12); (5) before Peter's great confession (Luke ix. 18); (6) when the people would have made Him king (John vi. 15); (7) at the transfiguration (Luke ix. 28, 29); (8) for Peter (Luke xxii. 32); (9) in Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 35); (10) for His murderers (Luke xxiii. 34); (11) at the moment of death (Luke xxiii. 46).

**The heaven was opened.** "Now that the God of heaven is baptized, the heavens open unto Him, which are opened unto all the faithful by Him" (Hall).

22. A voice from heaven came thrice to Jesus: (1) here at His baptism, the call to His work; (2) at the transfiguration (Mark ix. 7), during the crisis of His ministry, when He had begun to reveal His Passion to His disciples; (3) in the Temple court, just before His death (John xii. 28).

**In a bodily shape, like a dove.** "We are probably intended to understand a dove-like, hovering, lambent flame descending on the head of Jesus; and this may account for the unanimous legend that a fire or light was kindled in Jordan" (Farrar).

### III. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS, 23-38.

23. Jesus began, etc. *And Jesus Himself, when He began to teach, was about thirty years of age.* Comp. notes on ii. 7 and iii. 1.

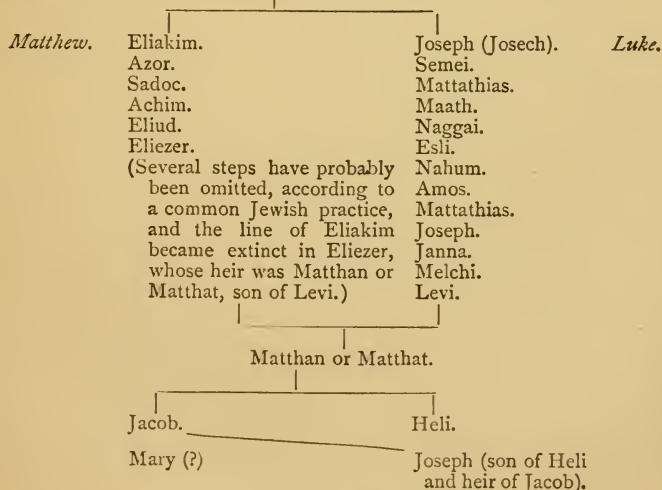
**The son of Joseph.** The genealogies of our Lord, given in Matthew and Luke respectively, have formed the subject of endless discussion. Perhaps the best account is given in Lord Arthur Harvey's *Genealogies of our Lord Jesus Christ*, summarized by the author in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, art. "Genealogy," and adopted by Canon Farrar in *Excursus ii.*, appended to his *Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. It is to be noted to begin with—

(1) That the genealogy of our Lord in St. Matthew (writing for Jews) *descends* from Abraham to Jesus, while in St. Luke (writing for Gentiles) it *ascends* from Jesus to Adam, and to God the Father.



which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Naum, which  
 26 was *the son* of Esli, which was *the son* of Nagge, which was  
*the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was  
*the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the*  
 27 *son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son*  
 of Rhesa, which was *the son* of Zorobabel, which was *the son*  
 28 of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri, which was *the son* of  
 Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of  
 Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of  
 29 Er, which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer,  
 which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat,  
 30 which was *the son* of Levi, which was *the son* of Simeon,  
 which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which  
 31 was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim, which was  
*the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the*  
*son* of Mattatha, which was *the son* of Nathan, which was *the*  
 32 *son* of David, which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son*

Omitted by Joanna (Hananiah, 1 Chron. iii. 19).  
 Matthew. Joda or Ab-iud (Hodaiah, 1 Chron. iii. 24).



If we start with the fact that St. Matthew, in order to get his genealogies into sets of fourteen, omitted several names (a common practice among

of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of  
 33 Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson, which was *the son* of  
 Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of  
 Esrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of  
 34 Juda, which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac,  
 which was *the son* of Abraham, which was *the son* of Thara,  
 35 which was *the son* of Nachor, which was *the son* of Saruch,  
 which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec,  
 36 which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala, which  
 was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which  
 was *the son* of Sem, which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the*  
 37 *son* of Lamech, which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was  
*the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the*  
 38 *son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan, which was *the*  
*son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son*  
 of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

Jewish genealogists), the reconciliation of the two descents is very simple, and the supposed difficulties are easily explained by well-known Jewish practices. *Two adoptions and one levirate marriage harmonize the descents.*

(1) *The adoptions.* (a) Jechoniah, according to Jer. xxii. 30, died childless; according to 1 Chron. iii. 17, he had a son, Assir, who probably died before his father. Where did the royal succession go? He was childless in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity in Babylon, and according to national custom could adopt a son. His choice was limited. Jehu and Athaliah had tried to exterminate the seed-royal; Daniel and others eligible were eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon; Ishmael and others were excluded by the murder of Gedaliah. Hence his natural choice would be among the seven sons of Neri who represented the Davidic race of the house of Nathan. We have no distinct intimation that he did so, but Zech. xii. 12, *the family of Nathan apart*, and rabbinical traditions that Nathan was to be the father of the Messiah, seem to confirm what Matthew asserts, when he makes Shealtiel, son of Neri, the *son by adoption* of Jechoniah (Jehoiachin).

(b) Zerubbabel, called son of Shealtiel, was the son of Pedaiah (1 Chron. iii. 17-19), one of the seven sons of Neri. It is therefore probable that Shealtiel, being childless, adopted his nephew.

(2) *The levirate marriage.* A common tradition, the details of which are confused, asserts a *levirate* marriage in the succession not long before the birth of Jesus. If we assume that Matthan or Matthat left two sons, Jacob and Heli, that Jacob died childless, and that Heli married his elder brother's wife in accordance with Jewish law, then Jacob would be Joseph's legal father, and Heli his natural father. But without any *levirate* marriage Joseph would be Jacob's heir, if Jacob died without sons, and, if Mary were Jacob's daughter, as tradition seems to hint, would in accordance with Jewish custom marry his cousin also.

Canon Farrar sums up the discussion as follows:—

(1) David's line through *Solomon* failed in Jechoniah, who therefore adopted Shealtiel, the descendant of David's line through *Nathan*.

CHAP. IV. 1 AND Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward

(2) Shealtiel, being childless, adopted Zerubbabel, son of his brother Pedaiah (1 Chron. iii. 17-19).

(3) Zerubbabel's grandson, Abihud (Matt.), Judah (Luke), or Hodaiah (1 Chron. iii. 24),—for the three names are only modifications of one another,—had two sons, Eliakim (Matt.) and Joseph (Luke).

(4) Eliakim's line failed in Eliezer; and thus Matthan or Matthat became his legal heir.

(5) This Matthan had two sons, Jacob the father of Mary, and Eli the father of Joseph; and Jacob, having no son, adopted Joseph his heir and nephew.

(6) It is true that these suggestions are not capable of rigid demonstration, but (a) they are entirely in accordance with Jewish customs; (b) there are independent reasons, which show that they are probable; (c) no other hypotheses are adequate to account for the early existence of a double genealogy in Christian circles.

IV. THE TEMPTATION, IV. 1-13; MATT. IV. 1-11; MARK I. 12, 13.

1. Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost. *Jesus full of the Holy Ghost*, cf. John iii. 34.

Was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. *Was led in the Spirit in the wilderness.* Luke implies that Jesus was in the Spirit during the whole of this mysterious temptation scene in the wilderness. His baptism had brought Him face to face with the public beginning of His ministry, and a power within Him mightier than His own human will was urging Him on. In this crisis of His human life He yearned for solitude and communion (1 Kings xix. 8; Ex. xxxiv. 28). His bodily wants were unheeded, and He fled to the wilderness near the Jordan ford, where He had been baptized, to begin a forty days' fast. Compare Matt. iv. 1-11; Mark i. 12-13. But this solitude did not bring Him repose to think out His life-work. It was a time of incessant conflict with the power of evil—a conflict whose last and awful crowning stage only has been made known to us.

2. Tempted of the devil. This narrative of the temptation, which must have been told by the Lord to His disciples, to make known to them and to us not merely what the Master went through for our sakes, but what we must suffer for His sake, was an intensely real struggle,—something that Jesus actually went through in the inward recesses of His human soul,—a conflict with a real spiritual adversary. "Christ conquered the Tempter, that the Christian may not be conquered by the Tempter" (Augustine) (Heb. ii. 18). This temptation gathered together in one sharp, protracted struggle that lifelong tempting which was ended only in Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 36). Jesus was tempted in order "to direct us whither to go for succour when we are tempted, even to Him who suffered being tempted" (Matt. Henry). "Thou shalt be sure to be assailed by Satan, when thou hast received the greatest enlargements from heaven" (Leighton). It is not in the power either of gifts or seals of grace to deliver us from the assaults of Satan, and



3 hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son  
 4 of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus  
 answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live  
 5 by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil,  
 taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him all the  
 6 kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil  
 said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory  
 of them : for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever

these are the more apt to come when we begin some good work for God.  
 "No sooner doth God say, *This is my Son*, than Satan says, *If Thou be the Son of God*."

He afterward hungered. The exhausted body became a prey to a deathly sinking ; Jesus felt Himself dying. Then the Tempter made his decisive assault.

3. And the devil said unto Him. *The first temptation.* Imagine the scene. Jesus, the Son of God, and but lately declared to be so by divine voice sounding through cleft heavens, dying of hunger ; at His feet the loaf-like flint stones of the wilderness, whose deceptive appearance "intensified the pangs of hunger, and added to the temptation the additional torture of an excited imagination," and the voice, "If Thou be the Son of God," use your divine power to preserve that dying body of yours for your Father's work. For if Jesus were to die then, what would become of man, whom He came to save ? "Beautiful soul ! with Thy high dreams and sacred purposes and noble impulses, the devil would turn all these high excitements and forces of Thine into ministries which would serve his own kingdom" (Parker). May not Jesus use His Godhead to save His humanity, so necessary for His work, and seemingly about to perish ?

4. Jesus answered, etc. The devil had put the divinity of Jesus in the forefront. Jesus puts His humanity first. "Man," He says, "shall not live." It is not in the time of temptation that Jesus can abandon His humanity to take shelter under His divinity ; the Man who is more than man must endure as man only, and that for the sake of brother-men. And what sustains Him is a promise given to all men in the Word of God (Deut. viii. 3). This special temptation and its resistance can be traced throughout Jesus' life and beyond it (John iv. 32-34 ; 1 Cor. x. 13).

5-6. *The second temptation* was one which evidently met Christ at every stage of His public ministry, to become the Messiah the Jews expected, and conquer by force of arms His Messianic kingdom. All the kingdoms in the world passed before Him, and the glory of them, and the power of rule to alleviate sorrow and rebuke crime ; and it was within His grasp to gain all if only He would go beyond the self-imposed limits of His task. But then He would save as a Prince from above, not as a brother, a village carpenter, standing side by side with His brethren (Heb. xi. 24-27). He resisted, and in resisting accepted the inevitable death which must end a life devoted to establish a kingdom without any aid from material force.

In a moment. (1 Cor. xv. 52.)

6. All this power will I give thee, etc. *To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them ; for it hath been delivered unto me, etc.* Compare John xii. 31, xiv. 30 ; Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12 ; Rev. xiii. 2.



7 I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall  
 8 be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee  
 behind me, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the  
 9 Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he  
 brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the  
 temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast  
 10 thyself down from hence : for it is written, He shall give his  
 11 angels charge over thee, to keep thee ; and in *their* hands they  
 shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a  
 12 stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, Thou  
 13 shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had

8. And Jesus answered, etc. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, etc.* The phrase, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, is not in the best MSS., and has probably been inserted by a copyist from Matt. iv. 10.

9-12. *The third temptation.* Jesus is on the pinnacle of the Temple, on the highest point of the holiest place in the world, where God's presence must be most felt. The devil proposes that he should test God's presence and God's promises. It was an appeal to presume upon God's promises and upon Jesus' Sonship. Nearness to God was the occasion of the temptation, and those only who are God's can feel the force of it. It comes to us when we presume upon our faith, and think to make God our servant. Jesus' answer is to say that such conduct is tempting God, laying traps for Him, and is not that childlike faith which true believers ought to have. His answer is a warning to all rash Christians who, not content with the trials of faith that man's life inevitably brings, seek to create difficult situations to prove the strength of their Christian purpose.

9. *A pinnacle of the Temple.* *The pinnacle, or wing, or battlement*, probably the parapet of the portico of Herod, which looked down into the deep Valley of Jehoshaphat.

The three temptations of Jesus are arranged differently in Matthew and in Luke, and it has been asked, Which is the chronological succession? The question is a needless one. Emotion such as this scene describes is not chronological. Matthew places last the temptation which appealed to the Messiah, while Luke makes the end come when the Tempter had appealed to the filial relation between Christ and God. In the whole temptation there is one common thought : the Tempter seeking to dissuade Jesus from His work by appeals to His power. He proposes that the Godhead should relieve the suffering humanity ; that the Messiah should take a royal and not a brotherly road to Messiahship ; that the Son should test the Father in a way that none of the many children He came to lead back to glory could do without tempting God. Jesus resisted as a man, with weapons in man's possession, with promises quoted from that portion of Scripture which every Jewish child was taught to commit to memory, and therefore could use as He had done. The child Jesus answered the Tempter.

" O generous love ! that He who smote  
 In man for man the foe,  
 The double agony in man  
 For man should undergo."

ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee :  
and there went out a fame of him through all the region  
15 round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

13. All the temptation. *Every kind of temptation.*

For a season. *Until a season, until a more suitable opportunity, or more favourable time.* Jesus was tempted as we are all through His life ; but this season must refer to Gethsemane. Compare Luke xxii. 53 and John xiv. 30.

*Luke omits between iv. 13 and iv. 14, a period of fourteen months. See Analysis, p. 22.*

### III. THE YEAR OF POPULARITY—CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN GALILEE, IV. 14–IX. 10.

*From the imprisonment of John the Baptist until news of his death came, Jesus made preaching journeys from Capernaum through Galilee.*

#### I. FROM NAZARETH TO CAPERNAUM, IV. 14–30.

##### 1. Teaching in Galilee, 14, 15.

14. In the power of the Spirit. With all His work in Judea behind Him, a well-known Rabbi of great spiritual power. The phrase perhaps indicates the beginning of that period of Christ's ministry when all were impressed by Him.

15. Taught in their synagogues. The Galileans had heard of His Judean teaching, now they were to hear Himself (John iv. 45). Mark tells us that the teaching was about the nearness of the kingdom of God, and that the Master called upon the people to repent, and to believe in the gospel—John's message with the gospel added.

Synagogues. The synagogue was usually built on the highest ground in the town, and in most cases its position was made known by a tall wooden pole planted like a flagstaff before the door. The worship of the synagogue was meant to serve instead of participation in the Temple service for Jews of the Dispersion and for the inhabitants of the provincial towns, and was held at the hour of sacrifice in the Temple. At the time of Jesus every small town in Palestine had at least one synagogue, and it was regarded as a duty enjoined on the rich to build synagogues for the people of the poorer villages (Luke vii. 5). They were for the most part simple rectangular walls with a portico. The men and women sat apart on separate benches. The seats in front were reserved for the elders of the synagogue, and for well-known scribes. The furniture consisted of an ark, or chest for the rolls of Scripture, and a reading-desk. The officials of the synagogue were—(1) the college or session of elders, presided over by a chief or ruler ; (2) the secretary, messenger, or apostle, who communicated either by letter or by visit, when necessary, with other synagogues ; (3) the collectors of alms, or deacons. The worship of the synagogue consisted in—(1) *Prayers* enjoined by the Law, recited by the

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up :  
 and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the  
 17 sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was  
 delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And  
 when he had opened the book, he found the place where it  
 18 was written, The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he  
 hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath  
 sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to  
 the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at  
 19 liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year  
 20 of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again  
 to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that  
 21 were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began  
 to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

reader, and joined in by the congregation ; while they were recited the people stood ; on feast days the same prayers were repeated more than once. (2) *Reading the Law*—a reader read the portion of the Law (Pentateuch) for the day, verse by verse, and when each verse was read a translator gave the Targum or Aramaic paraphrase translation ; sometimes in the time of Christ the translation was given in Greek. (3) *Reading the Prophets* in the same fashion. (4) *Sermon*, or Midrash, which was usually a practical application of the passage read from the Prophets. There was no singing in the synagogue service. Children after the age of five were allowed to be present at the services, and all above thirteen years of age were expected to attend. The lessons might be read by any devout Israelite whom the ruler permitted ; and the preaching was also open to any one known who had “a word of exhortation” to address to the worshippers (Acts xiii. 15).

## 2. First Rejection at Nazareth, 16-30.

16. **Went into the synagogue.** The story is told with simple picturesqueness. Jesus came to Nazareth, and on the Sabbath went to the synagogue, and, as He had done while He lived in the village, read the first lesson. When He had finished, the *chazzan* further handed Him the Book of Isaiah, which contained the second lesson. He unrolled the scroll until He found the lesson for the day, but instead of reading it all He stopped at the second verse, rolled up the MS., handed it back to the *chazzan*, and sat down—signs that He was about to preach (Matt. xxiii. 2).

18. **The spirit of the Lord, etc.** The quotation is from Isa. lxi. 1, 2. The passage would be read in Hebrew, which was a dead language, and then translated into the colloquial Aramaic of Palestine by the reader. This may account for the differences between the quotation and the Old Testament text.

19. **The acceptable year of the Lord.** The first reference is to the year of jubilee (Lev. xxv. 8-10), and secondly to the entrance of the kingdom of the Messiah.

21. **This day is this scripture.** The description of the sermon is wonderfully graphic. The breathless expectation of the people to hear their towns-

- 22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this  
 23 Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.  
 24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted  
 25 in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was  
 26 throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that*  
 27 *was* a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed,  
 28 saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might  
 30 cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst

man, whose fame had been noised abroad, the impression made by the grace of diction, the attention gradually drawn away from the manner to the matter of the discourse, the rude awakening to the fact that the carpenter, whom they were condescending to hear, was telling them that He was the Christ, the ejaculations, scornful criticisms, and sceptical insinuations, spoken aloud after the fashion of the time and place, and the rapid change in Christ's address, are all visibly before us. Jesus refuses to obtain their confidence by a display of miracles, He accepts their rejection of Him, and goes on to show that His work is not to be for their special benefit. In old times Israelites were passed over in favour of strangers (Naaman the Syrian, and a Phœnician widow), and so it shall be again. At this came the sudden outburst of fury (ver. 28), which almost ended in bloodshed. He came to his own possession, and His own people received Him not; His very brethren rejected Him.

24. No prophet is accepted (Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4). A saying perhaps often on the Saviour's lips (John iv. 44).

26. Sarepta, *Zarephath* (1 Kings xvii. 9). A small Phœnician town on the coast between Tyre and Sidon, now *Surafend*.

27. Naaman (2 Kings v. 1-14). These two references to what seem to be mere episodes in the Old Testament illustrate how Jesus opened up their own Scriptures to His countrymen, and showed lessons underlying what seemed to be trivial passages. Elijah and Elisha carried God's mercies to the Gentiles.

29. The brow of the hill. Probably a cliff about forty feet high, just above the city. To cast down a cliff was reckoned a form of stoning, the punishment for blasphemy (2 Chron. xxv. 12).

30. Passing through the midst of them. Not a miracle (John vii. 30, 44, viii. 59, x. 39, 40, xviii. 6).

31 of them went his way, and came down to Capernaum, a city  
 32 of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they  
 were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.  
 33 And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit  
 34 of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying,

## II. FIRST SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, IV. 31-41.

### 1. *The Demoniac Cured*, 31-37; Mark i. 21-28.

31. *Capernaum.* The site of Capernaum is not yet determined. Authorities are almost equally divided in favour of one or other of two places on the north-western shore of the lake—Tell Hum, about five miles south-west of the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, or Khan Minyeh, two or three miles south-west of Tell Hum. In the map, p. 84, the former site has been preferred. It was in the very centre of the most populous district in Palestine, and was a place of some importance, as it was a customs station (Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 27), and was the station of a detachment of Roman soldiers (Matt. viii. 5, 9; Luke vii. 1, 8); on the other hand, it could not have been a very large town, as it had only one synagogue.

### 32. *At His doctrine. At His teaching.*

Was with power, *with authority* (Matt. vii. 29), with the power that soul has over soul, that a soul full of the Holy Ghost must always have.

33. *A spirit of an unclean devil.* The question of demoniac possession suggested by this miracle demands some attention. The fact of "possession" is continually referred to in the Gospels, but no explanation is ever given, and the opinions of theologians differ upon the subject. On the one hand, it may be gathered from Scripture: (1) that our Lord Himself refers "possession" to Satanic agency (Luke x. 17-19, xi. 14-22); (2) that "possession" of the body by a demon is distinguished from Satanic influence over the soul; (3) that "possession" is distinguished from disease and perhaps from lunacy (though lunacy may really be epilepsy), as in Mark i. 32, *All that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils*; and in Matt. iv. 24, *All that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy*; (4) that "possession" was commonly accompanied by infirmity or disease, such as dumbness, blindness, symptoms of epilepsy, or violent insanity (Matt. ix. 32, xii. 22; Mark ix. 17-27, v. 1-5). On the other hand, it must be remembered—(1) that the Jews attributed nearly all diseases, and especially all cerebral or mental diseases, to the direct power of Satan, or, at least, to the immediate action of evil spirits; (2) that our Lord assents to this ordinary mode of speaking, and ascribes ordinary disease to direct Satanic agency, as in Luke xiii. 16, "This woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years;" (3) that Scripture commonly classes those "possessed" with maniacs. Upon the whole, it seems best to conclude that there was, in the case of those possessed, the exertion of a unique power of the spirit of evil altogether distinct from what is to be seen either in mental or bodily disease. Physicians assert that there are still cases which cannot be otherwise explained in Eastern lands, as in Syria and in India (comp. paper by Mr. Caldwell in *Contemporary Review* for February 1876). May we not see even in our own country some analogy to these cases of possession in the strange and awful



- Let *us* alone ; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth ? art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art ; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this ! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.
- And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever ; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever ; and it left her. And immediately she arose and ministered unto them.
- Now, when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him ; and he laid his

fact quite common among us, where sin lays hold on a man's soul by first taking possession of his body, where every tissue of the body becomes a temptation to sin, a chain to bind to sinful habit ?

34. **Let us alone.** The Greek word so translated is an inarticulate cry, like a criminal's when he feels the hand of the officer of justice on his arm, implying a certain fearful looking for of judgment.

**The Holy One of God.** At Christ's baptism God had spoken, "Thou art my beloved Son ;" and now Satan through this demoniac also bears witness, and between the two voices there was the rejection at Nazareth.

35. **Hold thy peace.** Jesus cannot accept the testimony of devils (Acts xvi. 16-18), He cannot give any ground for the accusation that He cast out devils by Beelzebub. The word means "*be muzzled*;" the word used by Christ in calming the storm, Mark iv. 39 ; a word for a beast.

36. **They were all amazed.** This miracle of healing the demoniac in Capernaum is the first recorded by Mark and by Luke. The first miracle recorded by Matthew is the healing of a leper by a touch (viii. 1-4) ; the first miracle recorded by John is the turning the water into wine at Cana in Galilee (ii. 1-11). The people who saw the demoniac cured were so astonished that each turned to his neighbour to ask his opinion, and to talk about the deed.

2. *The Cure of Peter's Wife's Mother*, 38-41 ; Matt. viii. 14-17 ; Mark i. 29-34.

38. **A great fever.** Luke, the physician, tells us what kind of fever it was,—not the slow intermittent fever of the district, but the more dangerous *typhus* fever (comp. v. 12, vi. 6, xxii. 50, 51 ; Acts iii. 6-8, iv. 22, ix. 33).

39. **He stood over her**, added by Luke ; Mark says He took her by the hand.

She arose, etc. The fever gone ; but the woman was not left weak as when fevers go naturally ; at once she arose and began to wait on them.

40. **When the sun was setting.** They waited till sunset, when the Jewish



41 hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking *them*, suffered  
 42 them not to speak : for they knew that he was Christ. And when it was day, he departed, and went into a desert place ; and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed  
 43 him, that he should not depart from them. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also :  
 44 for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

CHAP. V. 1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

Sabbath ended (Matt. viii. 16 ; Mark i. 32). Jesus healed them all, *one by one* (*He laid His hands on every one of them*), working on far into the night, and He did so as the Saviour. (Matt. viii. 17 quotes Isa. liii. 4, "*Himself* took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.")

### III. FIRST PREACHING JOURNEY IN GALILEE, IV. 42-V. 16.

1. *Retirement to a Desert Place*, 42-44 ; Matt. iv. 23-25 ; Mark i. 35-38.

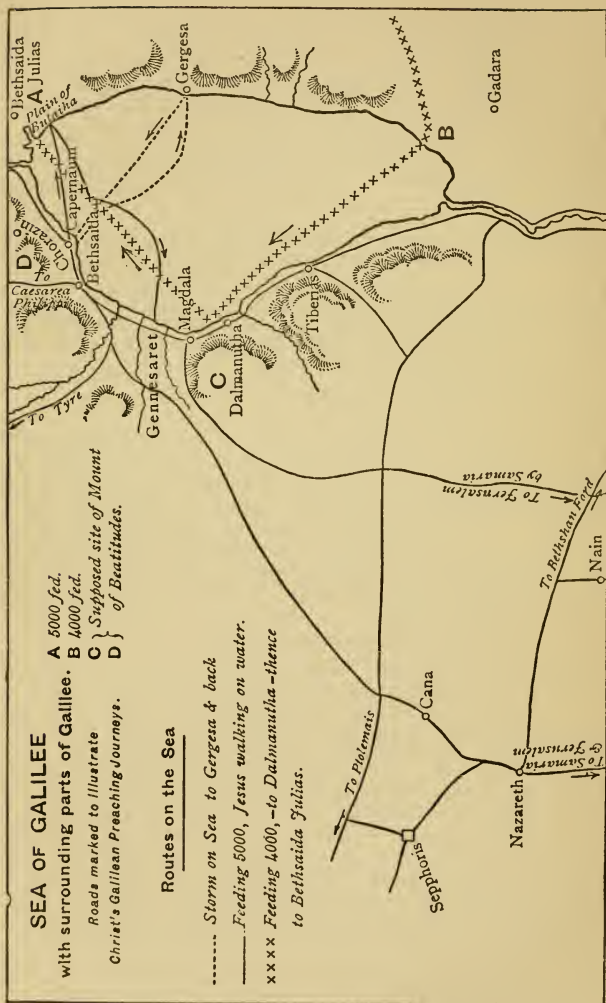
42. A solitary place. "A remarkable feature of the Sea of Galilee was that it was closely surrounded with desert solitudes. These 'desert places,' thus close at hand on the tablelands or in the ravines of the eastern and western ranges, gave opportunities of retirement for rest or prayer. . . . The lake in this double aspect is thus the reflex of that union of energy and rest, of active labour and deep devotion, which is the essence of Christianity" (Stanley). Mark tells us that Jesus went to pray. Comp. my *Commentary on Mark*, i. 35-39.

#### 2. *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, v. 1-II.

1. The lake of Gennesaret. Luke uses *lake*, because he wrote for Gentiles ; the Hebrews called every piece of water *sea*.

The Lake of Gennesaret or Sea of Galilee lies in a deep gorge which extends from the foot of Mount Hermon to the foot of Mount Hor. Down this gorge flows the Jordan, through the Waters of Merom, through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The lake is pear-shaped, and is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles long,  $6\frac{3}{4}$  broad in its widest part. The surface is 682.5 feet below the level of the ocean. It has various names in Scripture. It is called—(1) *The Sea of Chinneroth*, from its harp-like form, or else from a town of that name on or near its shores (Num. xxxiv. 11 ; Josh. xii. 3 ; comp. Josh. xix. 35). (2) *The Sea of Galilee*, from the province on its western shore (Matt. iv. 18 ; Mark vii. 31). (3) *The Lake of Gennesaret*, which many think to be a corruption of the old name Chinneroth, but which has also been said to mean the *gardens of princes* (Luke v. 1). (4) *The Sea of Tiberias*, from Tiberias, which, although only recently founded by Herod Antipas in the time of our Lord, had grown to be a large and flourishing town by the time that John wrote his Gospel (John xxi. 1). (5) *The Sea* (Matt. iv. 15). In our Lord's time the western

[Continued on p. 85.]



- 2 and saw two ships standing by the lake : but the fishermen  
 3 were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets. And  
 he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and  
 prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land.  
 And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.  
 4 Now, when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch  
 out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.  
 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled  
 all the night, and have taken nothing : nevertheless at thy  
 6 word I will let down the net. And when they had this done,  
 they inclosed a great multitude of fishes ; and their net brake.  
 7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the  
 other ship, that they should come and help them. And they  
 came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.  
 8 When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees,  
 saying, Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

shore of the lake was the busiest and most populous part of Galilee, while the eastern was for the most part a solitude.

2. **And saw two ships, etc.** This narrative of the call of four disciples and the miraculous draught of fishes is evidently a fuller account of the incidents recorded in Matt. iv. 18-22, and in Mark i. 16-22. Combining the narratives, we find : That while Jesus was preaching on the shore He was pressed by the crowd, and seeing two boats (*ships*) floating and moored near the shore (*standing by*), the one belonging to Simon and Andrew, the other to James and John, He went into Simon's, and used it as a pulpit from which to address the crowd. The disciples had been out all night and had caught nothing. Peter and Andrew were washing their nets, and John and James were mending theirs, all near enough to Jesus to hear His words, while they did their work. The sermon ended, Jesus resolved to reward Simon, and did so. Then came the draught of fishes, the nets *about to break*, the beckoning to James and John, Peter's conviction of sin, and the call of the four to leave all and follow Jesus.

**Nets.** *Casting-nets* (Matt. iv. 20), distinguished from the draw-net of Matt. iv. 18, and the large seine or hauling-net of Matt. xiii. 47.

5. **Master.** Not *Rabbi*, but *Teacher* ; the Gentile word used in a Gospel for the Gentiles.

6. **A great multitude of fishes.** The miracle did not consist in netting the fishes, but in knowing that the shoal was there.

8. **Depart from me.** Peter had been with Jesus before, and had seen wonderful deeds done by Him, but this miracle in the way of his occupation as fisherman, got within him as none other had done. It was his *burning bush*, his *Jacob's ladder*, where the heavens opened for him, and he saw himself as he had never done before, and felt God very near. He had had his spiritual yearnings, was among the chosen of Israel then living, but he had never got face to face with God as he now felt himself to be ; and the effect on him was to make him fear and wish himself away. Comp. Isa. vi. 5 ;

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the  
 10 draught of the fishes which they had taken : and so *was* also  
 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners  
 with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not ; from  
 11 henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had  
 brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed  
 him.

12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold  
 a man full of leprosy ; who, seeing Jesus, fell on *his* face,  
 and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make

Job xlii. 5, 6 ; Ex. iii. 6. There is bitterness as well as sweetness in the first real revelation of God to a man.

10. From henceforth, etc. For this miracle, like all others, was a sign or parable as well as a deed of wonder, and, like all signs, was a prediction. It was fulfilled when on the day of Pentecost three thousand souls were enclosed in Peter's gospel-net. Jesus Himself explained the parable in Matt. xiii. 47-50.

11. They forsook all. This was the second call to all four, and was soon to be followed by their formal installation as apostles. They forsook all for Jesus, and were promised an hundredfold in return (Luke xviii. 28-30 ; Mark x. 29, 30). When their hopes centred in Jesus seemed blighted they went back to their fishing (John xxi. 1-3), and were recalled to their life-work by their risen Lord.

### 3. *Cleansing of a Leper*, 12-16 ; Matt. viii. 1-4 ; Mark i. 40-45.

12. A man full of leprosy. One infected with the most terrible of all diseases to which the Jews were subject, which was called the "Finger of God," "the stroke," which was believed to be incurable, and which was made the special type of sin, the outward and visible sign of inward spiritual corruption, the sacrament of death. "Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a corrupting of all the humours, a poisoning of the very springs of life, a dissolution, little by little, of the whole body" (Trench). The disease had various forms. In the worst, ulcers attacked one part of the body after another until the flesh rotted, and parts, the fingers, for example, fell off one after another. The leper bore about him the emblems of death: the rent garments, the head bare, the lips covered. He had to keep far off from others, and to make known his disease by crying out, "Unclean !" Notice how Luke describes the scene so that you see it: the leper, in the last stage of the disease, beseeching, kneeling at a distance, Christ's touch, His word, the cure. It was pollution to touch a leper (Lev. viii. 44-46) ; "but He, Himself remaining undefiled, cleansed him whom He touched ; for in Him health overcame sickness, and purity defilement, and life death" (Trench). For accounts of Old Testament lepers, see Ex. iv. 6 ; Num. xii. 10 ; 2 Kings v. 1, 27.

If thou wilt. His faith must have been strong ; leprosy was an almost incurable disease, and hitherto there had been only one recorded case of a leper cured by miracle, the case of Naaman alluded to by Jesus in His sermon at Nazareth (Luke iv. 27 ; 2 Kings v. 1-14).

13 me clean. And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will : be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy  
 14 departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man : but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto  
 15 them. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him : and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be  
 16 healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.  
 17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by,

14. To tell no man. Perhaps because our Lord believed that the Pharisees might have compelled Him to stop His work in order to go through the levitical rites of purification had they known that He had touched the leper. Matthew (viii. 1-4) tells us that Jesus was going first, and the crowd was following ; the touch might have been so instantaneous that no one knew of it but Jesus and the leper. The law, besides, had to be fulfilled (Lev. xiv. 1-32). The crowds were already great, and too much excitement might interfere with work, and the leper's disobedience had in fact this result. "Christ's bodily presence could be but in one place at a time ; and those that came to Him from every quarter could not get near Him, but by His spiritual presence He is with His people wherever they are, and comes to them to every quarter. This shows how expedient it was for us that Christ should go away and send the Comforter" (Matt. Henry).

According as Moses commanded. "Two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop . . . and on the eighth day two he-lambs without blemish, and one ewe-lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil" (see Lev. xiv. 1-32).

For a testimony unto them—(1) to the priests, that they might assure themselves that the miracle was real ; (2) to the people who were following Jesus, to show that Jesus came to fulfil the law.

15. But so much the more. It is clear that the indiscreet zeal and self-importance of the leper cured hindered Christ's work. The moment He was recognised, He was at any moment liable to be surrounded by a surging crowd of ignorant, gaping sightseers, who hindered His spiritual work, and, like the crowd on the day of the miracle of the loaves, might have insisted on proclaiming Him king.

#### IV. SECOND SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, V. 17-VI. 12.

##### 1. *The Paralytic Cured*, 17-26 ; Matt. ix. 2-8 ; Mark ii. 1-12.

17. Pharisees and doctors of the law, etc., who had come out of every town of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem. Jesus had already come into collision with the scribes of Judea (John v. 18), and with the incidents belonging to this miracle of healing the paralytic His conflict with the scribes of Galilee began. These scribes formed an exceedingly powerful organization in the time of Jesus. The synagogue services gradually developed a class of zealous scholars who made the study of the law their profession. They were



which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem ; and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them.

- 18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy : and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to  
19 lay *him* before him. And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down through the tiling

called *Sopherim*, scribes or writers, because they had been the first who wrote out exact copies of the law for the synagogue, and in the times of Jesus the name comprehended all those who made it their profession to study the law and teach their fellows its requirements. This study required a man's whole time, and the scribes had become a special learned class, which charged itself with the care of the law, as the priests and Levites took charge of the Temple services. Celebrated teachers collected disciples, and taught them in schools ; and in Jerusalem, where the scribes abounded, several chambers in the forecourts of the Temple were set apart for this purpose. The teacher sat on a raised seat, while the scholars were seated at his feet. The teachers or rabbis, as a rule, learned some handicraft wherewith to support themselves, for they charged no fees for their instructions. Rabbi Hillel was a day-labourer, Rabbi Joshua was a needlemaker, Rabbi Judah a baker, Rabbi Simeon a carpetmaker, and Paul a weaver of goat's hair. These common callings did not interfere with the dignity of the teachers. They were allotted the first seats in the synagogue, the upper places at table were reserved for them, and their dress marked their dignity. Their political importance was great, for it was their instructions which enveloped the whole Jewish life from the cradle to the grave in the precepts of the law, and prevented the nation from amalgamating with Gentiles or submitting to be seduced by the cosmopolitan ideas which the Roman conquerors tried to impart to subject nations. They fulfilled the Mosaic law by multiplying its precepts, and intensifying its minute ceremonial observances, and therefore were instinctively opposed to a Teacher whose aim was to enforce the moral ideas which lay beneath the Mosaic code.

And the power of the Lord, etc. *And the power of the Lord was with Him to heal.*

18. Which was taken with a palsy. *That was palsied or paralyzed.*

19. They let him down, etc. To understand the scene, it is necessary to remember that the house was most likely a fisherman's cottage, low and flat-roofed. The roofs were made by laying first large beams, and then across them rude joists. On these were laid flat stones or slabs of tile or dried clay, on which was spread earth or gravel rolled hard with a stone roller kept on the roof for the purpose. The men first dug through the earth, as Mark says (ii. 4), and then pulled up the tile slabs, as Luke tells us. "Examine one of the houses in this same region, and you will see at once that the thing is natural and easy to be accomplished. The roof is only a few feet high, and by stooping down and holding the corners of the bed (merely a thickly-padded quilt, as in this region), they would let down the sick man without any apparatus of ropes or cords to assist them" (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, p. 358).



20 with *his* couch, into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house. And imme-

20. Man, thy sins, etc. *Son or child* (Mark); *Son, be cheerful* (Matt.), *thy sins*, etc. Our Lord saw the man's heart, his misery of soul, that he cared most for spiritual blessing, and that he feared that his sins, which had brought his disease, would prevent the Saviour healing him. It was necessary to speak to his soul before healing his body (Luke vii. 48, and John v. 14). "How many in every age can testify that this palsied man's experience has been their own! . . . Bereavements have proved mercies. . . . Sickneses have led them to the Great Physician of souls" (Ryle). Christ by His visible miracles taught men to understand His invisible miracles. We may bear our friends to Christ now, in the arms of faith and prayer.

21. Which speaketh blasphemies. The first charge brought by the scribes against Jesus in Galilee, and also the last charge on which He was in the end condemned. We may imagine that when the paralytic did not rise from his bed as soon as Jesus spoke to him, the scribes who were watching the scene said, This man pretends to God's power when he has not got it. He blasphemeth.

23. Whether is it easier. More correctly, *Why is it easier to say, Thy sins have been forgiven thee, than to say, Arise and walk?* It was not easier; for to say these words as Christ said them was as impossible as to cure the paralytic. Two deeds are contrasted, *both* impossible to man and alike easy to God. He who had done the one at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 8) to the impotent man, must be God who can do the other. In order to manifest His power to the scribes, our Lord added the words, *Arise and walk*, and really bids them infer that the hidden work of forgiveness had as surely followed the first words as the manifest cure followed the command to rise and walk. He did the one which was within the sight and observation of all, that they might know that He could do and had done the other, which they could not see.

24. The Son of man, not Son of a man. Our Lord's favourite title for Himself during His sojourn on earth; but never, with three exceptions (Acts vii. 56; Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14), applied to the Eternal Son of God by His disciples themselves.

Hath power on earth, etc. The Son of Man, as a *Messianic* title, was derived from Dan. vii. 13, and there describes humiliation; but even in Christ's humiliation here on earth God hath so highly exalted Him that He has power to forgive sins. How much more in His estate of exaltation!

Thy couch. The three Evangelists use three different words, which have

diately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he  
 26 lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And  
 they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled  
 with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican,  
 named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom : and he said  
 28 unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed  
 29 him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house :  
 and there was a great company of publicans and of others

all been translated by the one English word bed. Matthew uses the common Greek word ; Luke employs a more classical term ; Mark says *krabbatos* (*grabatus*), and thereby tells us that the bed was merely a pallet or mat—the commonest or poorest kind of bed, a rug which could be spread out in the evening, and rolled up and put aside during the day.

25. Before them. The crowd, before impenetrable, yields to him ; and all see that he is cured, for he not only rises, but shows that he has been quite restored, by carrying his bed. The miracle was not merely a manifestation, but an attestation of the divine authority of Jesus.

26. All amazed, and glorified God, Mark ii. 12. The scribes as well as the others, for in the intensity of feeling there was a recognition of divinity. "The words *they were all amazed*, should be, *amazement seized them all*, and *amazement* in the Greek is a remarkable word ; it is the original of our *ecstasy*, and is the word rendered *trance* in Acts x. 10, xi. 5, xxii. 17" (Stock).

2. *The Call of a Publican to be a Disciple*, 27–32 ; Matt. ix. 9–13 ;  
 Mark ii. 14–17.

27. He went forth. Out of the house, past the custom-house, down by the shore of the lake.

Levi, or Matthew. It was common for Jews to take a new name when they began a new career. Hence the meaning of "the new name" (Rev. ii. 17).

Publican. See note on iii. 12. Publicans "were nothing less than renegades and traitors, who for filthy lucre's sake had sided with the enemy, and now collected for a profane heathen treasury that tribute which was the evident sign of the subjection of God's people to a Gentile yoke. This scorn and hate found utterance in a thousand ways ; no alms might be received from their money-chest ; it was not even lawful to change money there ; and their testimony was not received in courts of justice" (Trench). It is touching to notice that Matthew alone styles himself "the publican" in the list of apostles. Christ, who cured the leper, called Matthew to be an apostle. What sinner can fear to kneel before Christ when he sees the Lord sitting among publicans and sinners, and calling Matthew the publican to be an apostle ?

At the receipt of custom, R. V. *at the place of toll*, where the dues were levied on the fish, fruit, and other produce which made the imports and exports at Capernaum, or for the Roman road that ran through the town. The shop of extortion cannot conceal from Jesus a vessel of election.

29. Made him a great feast. Matthew's first missionary effort to bring his friends face to face with Jesus.

30 that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and  
 31 drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but  
 32 they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the

30. Scribes and Pharisees murmured. Mark says that they spoke to the disciples. They talked *at* Jesus, not to Him. According to the customs of the East, they could come into the room where the guests were dining, and, according to their traditions or interpretations of the Mosaic law, such association with publicans was lawful, while to eat with them was polluting. "In the room where we were received (in Damietta), besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on those side seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. They spoke to those at table on business, on the news of the day, and our host spoke freely to them. We afterwards saw this custom at Jerusalem . . . first one and then another stranger opened the door and came in, taking the seats by the wall. They leaned forward and spoke to those at table" (*Scripture Manners and Customs*, p. 185).

31. A physician. Our Lord consorted with sinners to heal them.

32. The righteous. There is a touch of sarcasm in the words, "You who are so holy that you cannot defile yourselves even to save your fellow-men." "The spiritual Physician finds the sickness of those sinners wholesome, the health of those Pharisees desperate: that wholesome because it calls for the help of the physician; this desperate because it needs not. Every soul is sick; those most that feel it not, those that feel it complain, those that complain have cure. . . . Sin hath made us sick unto death; make Thou us but as sick of our sin, we are as safe as Thou art gracious" (Hall).

3. *Discourse on Fasting*, 33-39; Matt. ix. 14-17; Mark ii. 18-22.

33. Why do the disciples of John fast often? From Mark's narrative it appears that Jesus and His disciples were at the feast in Matthew's house on a fast-day, on one of the days set apart both by the Pharisees and by John's disciples for fasting. John was in the dungeon at Machærus, and his disciples, sad at the fate of their master, were carrying out his ascetic commands, and one of their set fasts was going on that day. Moses enjoined *one* fast on the great day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29); others were added. The Pharisees fasted "twice in the week" (Luke xviii. 12), on Thursday, the day on which Moses reascended Mount Sinai, and on Monday, the day on which he returned. They ask why Christ does not *make* His disciples fast. He contrasts *being made to fast* with voluntary fasting in time of trouble, and implies "that all external acts and exercises should spring naturally out of some pure and deep emotion of the heart. Why should His disciples be *made* to act as if they were sorry when they were really glad?" (Hanna). The scribes and the Pharisees had objected to the company Jesus kept, the disciples of John objected to His disregard of the old religious customs or forms of religious life in which they had been trained, and which they had presumably found

- 34 Pharisees ; but thine eat and drink ? And he said unto them,  
 Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the  
 35 bridegroom is with them ? But the days will come, when the  
 bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall  
 they fast in those days.

beneficial. Our Lord seizes the occasion to lay down principles which ought to regulate all religious life and its expression, in four short parables, or suggested parables—the bridegroom and his intimate friends, who have the closest fellowship with him ; old garments and new cloth ; old wine-skins and new fermenting wine. These parables or illustrations were naturally suggested by the feast in which He was then sharing—(1) a wedding feast, (2) a wedding garment, (3) wine and bottles, and (4) wine tasted.

34. The children of the bride-chamber, lit. *the sons of the bride-chamber*, the Jewish name for those wedding guests who accompanied the bridegroom to the house of the bride, who were usually the most intimate companions of the bridegroom. The question put respectfully by the disciples of John, and maliciously by the Pharisees, implied, We acknowledge you to be a religious teacher, able to lead us to truer worship and bring us nearer God ; but why act thus in flagrant violation of our old religious life, with its prescriptions of holy living which we have ourselves found so helpful, and which we have received from our fathers ? Our Lord gently puts all that aside. He gives rules to His own followers. The first requisite for the religious life He has introduced and is proclaiming is union and communion with Himself, and His maxims are meant only for those who have this fellowship, for the children or sons of the bride-chamber, for His disciples. This solidarity with Jesus, this union and communion with Christ, is the first requisite for religious life, and for all its expression in habits of life and worship. Questions of fasting can only be discussed after that has been clearly understood.

The bridegroom. There is perhaps a tender appeal to the disciples of John in the use of the illustrative phrase. Jesus reminds them that the Baptist had spoken of Him as the Bridegroom, at whose coming he had rejoiced (John iii. 29). Will they not see in Him what their master saw, and become sons of the bride-chamber, and then they will know naturally and by inward experience the life of communion with Himself in which He is training His disciples ?

35. Taken away. The word implies a violent death. Our Lord has always the thought of His death before Him. He had hinted it to the Jewish rulers (John ii. 19), to Nicodemus (John iii. 14), and now He says, when that death comes, His disciples will be sad enough, and will show their sorrow without being *made* to do so. The point on which our Lord insists is the natural expression of religious feeling arising from felt fellowship with the Saviour. This cannot be stimulated by means of a set round of external ceremonies, prescribed with no reference whatever to the feelings of the heart produced by communion with Himself. The religious life, however it shows itself, must do so without artificial promptings. Fasting and sorrow were synonymous terms among the Jews ; they fasted to show their sorrow. The only real sorrow for the Christian is separation from Christ, and when this is felt, sorrow and its natural signs will come. The disciples will be sad enough in those days of darkness after Gethsemane, and no ceremonial law will be needed to compel them to show signs of sorrow. The words of our



36 And he spake also a parable unto them ; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old : if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of  
 37 the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles ; else the new wine will burst the bottles,

Lord, of course, go far beyond the trifling question raised by John's disciples, and find an echo in all Christian experience. His people are joyous when they feel His presence ; but times do come of despondency and depression, when Christ seems taken away, or is felt to be far off, and then sorrow will show itself in signs natural and appropriate.

36. Piece of a new garment, *i.e.* which had not been sent to the fuller, and was not teazled nor shrunk. Christ points to the well-dressed Pharisees and then to the clothes of His disciples. Would their robes be the better of patches from yours? The garment, the outward walk and conversation, is not bettered by taking a patch of religious observance and sewing it on ; the better way is to take the old garment and transform it thread by thread from within, as if it were a living thing, till old things are passed away. It is not a patch on our old garments, but a new wedding robe that Christ gives.

Putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old. The exact meaning of this short parable is better seen when the different versions in Matthew and Mark are compared with Luke's. Luke says, R.V., "And He spake also a parable unto them : No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment, else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old ;" Matthew, "No man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment, for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made ;" and Mark, "No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment : else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made." The parable speaks about (1) *two* garments, a new and an old ; (2) a piece of cloth is cut out of the new to patch the old ; and (3) the result is a *treble* mischief. For (*a*) the new garment, rent to patch the old, is spoiled ; (*b*) the mend on the old is unsuitable, the new patch is glaringly out of place ; and (*c*) the rent in the old is increased by the shrinking of the undressed cloth cut from the new garment. Our Lord is referring to the demands of the Pharisees and the disciples of John that He should command His disciples to obey the precepts of the traditional Judaism, and so to make the gospel a mere addition to the Mosaic economy, on a level with Pharisaism, or no higher at least than the reformation of John the Baptist. They asked Him to declare that Christianity was what the Jews "of the sect of the Pharisees who believed" declared it to be in apostolic and post-apostolic times, Mosaism with a new prophet. Our Lord answers that it is impossible to consider His work in this way. Christianity is the new garment. It will not do to cut patches from it to fill up the rents of Judaism. To do so would be to spoil Christianity, to make painful the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, and to hasten the fall of Judaism itself. Christianity must take the outward forms of expression which are natural to it.

37. New wine into old bottles. "The manufacture of these goatskin bottles is very simple. The animal is skinned from the neck by cutting off the head and legs, and then drawing the skin back without making any slit in the belly. The skins in this state, with the hair on, are then steeped in

- 38 and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles ; and both are preserved.
- 39 No man also, having drunk old *wine*, straightway desireth new ; for he saith, The old is better.

tannin, and filled with a decoction of bark for a few weeks. . . . They are then sewn up at the neck and the seams pitched" (Tristram). The parable has usually been explained to mean that new bottles stretch, old ones are hard and dry, cannot *give* when the wine ferments and expands. So the expansive joy and the then partially-developed freedom of Christianity could not be safely confined in the old unyielding forms of Judaism, but must have new and more elastic ones of their own. Canon Farrar, however, says that this mode of explanation is physically untenable. The bottles are of course skins, and the wine is the juice of the grape which has not yet been fermented, or "must." He maintains, however, that when "must" begins to ferment, it cannot be kept in any bottle new or old, for the force of fermentation and the expansion caused thereby are sufficient to burst the most flexible wine-skin. He thinks that our Lord is not thinking at all of fermented intoxicating wine, but of the "must" which can be kept for years, and is so kept in all wine countries, and which can be kept with perfect safety in *new leathern bottles*. It is unsafe to put it in old bottles which have contained "wine" in the ordinary sense, because in such a case "minute portions of the albuminoid matter would be left adhering to the skin, and receive yeast germs from the air, and keep them in readiness to set up fermentation in the new unfermented contents of the skin." If by any such chance fermentation were accidentally produced, no bottle new or old could stand the pressure. Hence ancient writers on the art of wine-making are careful to say that the unfermented "must" is put into a *new* vessel. To attempt to combine Judaism and Christianity would raise such fermentation as would destroy both. Our Lord forewarns His disciples against those Hebraizing Christians against whom Paul had to fight his lifelong battle, and who are here innocently anticipated by those disciples of John the Baptist.

39. *The old is better.* This fourth parable is not given by Mark or by Matthew. It is spoken by Jesus out of sympathy, no doubt, with John's disciples, accustomed to the ascetic and formalist religion, which with all its defects had given them spiritual consolation. They are like men at a feast who have been drinking old wine. New wine is brought, and, no matter how much better it really may be, there is a want of mellowness in it which makes it somewhat distasteful to them. John's disciples feel Jesus' teaching "new," strange, and cling to the old.

Our Lord's answer to the questioners is therefore fourfold :—

(1) Specially as to fasting, Christianity is essentially a life lived in union and communion with Christ, and a time of felt fellowship with the Master is too joyous to find expression in signs of sorrow.

(2) Christianity is not a sect of Judaism, and its forms of worship must come naturally from that religious fellowship with Christ which is the essential part of it.

(3) No one can be at the same time under the law and under grace ; to combine the systems is fatal.

(4) Yet much allowance must be made for conscientious men who cling to old ways.



CHAP. VI. 1 AND it came to pass, on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? 3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and 4 they which were with him; how he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to

4. *The Disciples pluck Ears of Corn on the Sabbath Day*, vi. 1-5; Matt. xii. 1-8; Mark ii. 23-28.

1. **He went.** Luke graphically shows us Jesus walking along through the wide stretches of waving corn which covered the plain of Gennesaret and the neighbouring valleys. The roads were only narrow footpaths, and the travellers had all the appearance of wading through the corn.

On the second Sabbath after the first. What that means is very doubtful, and is unimportant, for there can be no question about the time of year. The narrative has been generally held to mean that the corn was wheat, and not barley, for barley cannot be treated by rubbing in the hands as wheat can. The first ripe sheaf of barley was presented at the Passover (April), and the first ripe sheaf of wheat at Pentecost (fifty days after). The Sabbath was some few weeks after the Passover. The Revised Version reads *on a Sabbath*.

**Plucked the ears of corn.** To pluck ears of corn was allowed by custom and by the law (Deut. xxiii. 25: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn"), but by rabbinical tradition "to pluck ears" was to *reap*, and to rub ears in the hand was to *thresh*, and these actions were therefore forbidden on the Sabbath. So it was lawful to wear shoes without nails, but unlawful to have nails, because nails were a "burden," and burdens could not be carried on the Sabbath. "The vitality of these artificial notions among the Jews is extraordinary. Abarbanel relates that when in 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain, and were forbidden to enter the city of Fez lest they should cause a famine, they lived on grass; yet even in this state religiously avoided the violation of their Sabbath by plucking the grass with their hands. To avoid this they took the much more laborious method of grovelling on their knees and cropping it with their teeth." Matthew and Mark note that the Pharisees spoke to Jesus as soon as the disciples *began* to pluck. This seems to imply that they were spies on the watch to find matter of accusation against the great Teacher.

3. **Have ye not read so much as this?** *Have ye not even read this*, etc. Notice how Jesus lays stress on the necessity of David's deed; all laws of positive institution must be accommodated to circumstances from their very nature. This distinguishes them from permanent moral obligations.

4. **The house of God**, *i.e.* the tabernacle when it was in Nob, an old priestly town (1 Sam. xxii. 19) near Jerusalem (Isa. x. 32).

**The shewbread.** The twelve cakes of fine unleavened flour, sprinkled

them that were with him ; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone ? And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught : and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day ;

with frankincense, and set on a golden table, called also the "continual bread" (Num. iv. 7), reserved for the priests. "It shall be Aaron's and his sons'." Our Lord quotes a *fact*, a deed of David's, their favourite hero, to show that mercy is better than sacrifice. If hunger made David, and them that were with him, blameless in eating the consecrated shewbread, may not the same plea of necessity be urged to justify the disciples, although they had transgressed a rabbinical tradition ?

5. *The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.* *The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.* The scribes maintained that the regulations about the Sabbath were the most important part of the whole law, and that their observance formed the essential contents of religion. Thus Jesus sets Himself above Mosaism, and announces His right to interpret, to fulfil, and to set aside. He declares that the Sabbath is to be used as a gift of God given to further the spiritual and temporal good of man ; and in turn we are bound to observe the Sabbath in such a way that our temporal and spiritual welfare is thereby furthered. "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath, because He is the divine rest and the divine celebration ; He is both the principle and the object of the Sabbath ; He rests in God, and God in Him ; He is the mediator of proper Sabbath observance, and the interpreter of the Sabbath law" (Lange). Our Lord was careful to show His lordship over the Sabbath by selecting that day over and over again for a time to work miracles ; and two cures which He wrought at Jerusalem on the Sabbath were carefully made public (John v. 8, ix. 7). He was evidently anxious, disregarding the popular orthodoxy of the day, to bring out the mercy of God in the gift of the Sabbath, to show that the end for which the Sabbath was ordained was that it might bless man. "Jesus chose to do many of His miracles on the Sabbath, that He might do the work of abrogation and institution both at once" (Jeremy Taylor).

5. *The Man with the Withered Hand*, vi. 6-11 ; Matt. xii. 9-14 ; Mark iii. 1-6.

6. *Whose right hand was withered.* An old tradition recorded in the Gospel of the Ebionites adds, that he was a stonemason by trade, and that he asked Jesus to heal him and relieve him from having to beg his bread. He had come on the Sabbath day to be healed, and this act was itself esteemed a sin by some of the stricter scribes of the school of Shammai (Luke xiii. 14). His hand had been injured, and the effect was to wither or dry up the arm. Such cases are incurable.

7. *They watched Him.* The scribes and Pharisees both of Galilee and Jerusalem were tracking Him like bloodhounds. His disregard of the "traditions," whereby they had made the "Sabbath law" of none effect, seemed best fitted to form matter of legal accusation against Him, so they

8 that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose  
 9 and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to  
 10 do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole  
 11 as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

kept "watching Him." They came to the synagogue not to worship, but to watch Him; and while so particular about Jesus keeping the Fourth Commandment, they broke it themselves by their malice and treachery.

8. **Stand forth.** Matthew tells us that the Pharisees first asked Him, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? A crisis had come, and our Lord met it at once. He asked the man to stand forth, and with the eyes of all the people on Him, He points to the withered hand, and asks His counter question—

9. **Is it lawful to do good, etc.** Is it better to have the desire to heal, as I have to this man, or the desire to kill, as you have towards me? He was intending to do good; they meant, and the people knew that they meant, to do Him as much harm as they could. One of their best maxims was, "He who neglects to preserve life when it is in his power is a murderer." Christ appeals to their own better teaching. They are silent. Mark alone mentions the silence of the Pharisees, and the anger of Jesus.

10. **Stretch forth thy hand.** No word of healing; Christ's power could work without breaking even the rabbinical Sabbath regulations.

**Restored whole as the other.** This miracle was remarkable for several reasons:—(a) It was wrought in direct challenge to the scribes to defend, on divine principles, some of their burdensome sabbatical regulations—Jesus publicly separated Himself from the scribes; (b) it was wrought without the employment of any external means either of word or touch—the disease was not rebuked, nor was the hand touched; (c) it was one of seven miracles wrought, the most of them evidently on purpose, on the Sabbath. The seven are—(1) the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (John v. 1-16); (2) the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark i. 21-28); (3) Peter's wife's mother (Mark i. 29-31); (4) this man with the withered hand (Mark iii. 1-6); (5) the blind man at Siloam (John ix. 1-41); (6) the paralytic woman (Luke xiii. 11-17); (7) the man with the dropsy (Luke xiv. 1-6).

11. **With madness, foolishness, unreasoning blind resentment,** such as men have who deem themselves infallible, yet cannot answer, and yet must put down their opponents. The folly that persecutes. In this state of mind they even allied themselves with the half-pagan Herodians (Mark iii. 6), and held formal consultation (Matt. xii. 14) how they might get rid of Jesus.

- 12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.  
 13 And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples : and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles ;

#### V. THE SECOND PREACHING JOURNEY, VI. 12-49.

##### 1. *The Call of the Twelve Apostles*, 12-16 ; Mark iii. 13-19.

12. He went out. We have now reached an important turning-point in the gospel history. (1) The fame of the Saviour had spread abroad in every direction throughout the land, and the current of popular feeling had set strongly in His favour. But (2) the animosity of the ruling powers had deepened in intensity alike in Judea and Galilee, and an active correspondence was going on between the scribes and Pharisees in both districts respecting Him. Meanwhile (3) He Himself had seemed to stand almost alone. A few indeed had gathered round Him as His disciples, but as yet they did not present the appearance of a regular organized body, nor had they received a distinct commission to spread His doctrines. Such a body was now to be formed. Such a commission was now to be given (Maclear). Accordingly Jesus retired to the high land near Capernaum, and spent the whole night in prayer (Luke vi. 12). Then at the dawn of the following day, He calleth unto Him whom He would of the disciples, and solemnly set apart twelve.

All night in prayer. The Evangelists frequently call attention to the prayers of Jesus—(1) at His baptism (Luke iii. 21) ; (2) after this night of toil in healing (Mark i. 35) ; (3) after a day of like severe toil (Luke v. 16) ; (4) before choosing the apostles (Luke vi. 12) ; (5) before Peter's great confession (Luke ix. 18) ; (6) when the people would have made him king (John vi. 15) ; (7) at His transfiguration (Luke ix. 28, 29) ; (8) for Peter (Luke xxii. 32) ; (9) in Gethsemane (Mark xiv. 35) ; (10) for His murderers (Luke xxiii. 34) ; (11) at the moment of death (Luke xxiii. 46). "Those that have most business in public, and of the best kind, must sometimes be alone with God ; must retire into solitude, there to converse with God, and keep up communion with Him" (Matt. Henry). For prayer is a holy conference with God.

13. He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles. The *calling* of the apostles, which is described here by Luke and by Mark iv. 13-19, is to be distinguished from their first *mission*, recorded by Luke ix. 1-6, and by Matt. x. 1-8. Both occurred at crises in our Lord's life, the *calling* shortly after the conspiracy against Him by the Pharisees and the Herodians, and His consequent expulsion from the synagogues ; the *mission* just before Christ's first journey of flight after hearing of the murder of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas. A comparison of the accounts in Mark and Luke enables us to see that Jesus on the previous evening retired to the high land behind Capernaum, where, doubtless apart from the crowd of disciples, our Lord spent the night in prayer (vi. 12). When the morning came He summoned His disciples around Him, and chose the Twelve to be His special messengers or missionaries. Then He went down to some place on more level ground (vi. 17), and preached the Sermon on the Mount to the Twelve, to the disciples, and also to a great concourse of people who had come to hear and see Him.

The more intimate followers of Jesus had hitherto been called *disciples* or *scholars* ; from the multitude of disciples our Lord selected *twelve*, who, con-



tinuing disciples, were to be something else besides. They were to be men *sent forth* to carry on Christ's work after His time was fulfilled.

The *calling* of these twelve men was such an important event in the gospel history that it is well to notice—

(1) The *title* or *designation* given them in Matthew and Luke. Apostles, which is used either as an adjective, *delegated* or *sent forth*, or as a noun, *delegate*, *ambassador*, or *missionary*. The Greek word has various meanings:—

(a) In classical Greek, it is almost always used of a *naval expedition*, or a *fleet despatched on foreign service*.

(b) In the Septuagint the word occurs once only, and there with the meaning of *messenger commissioned by God*: "I am a messenger unto thee of heavy tidings" (1 Kings xiv. 6).

(c) In the time of our Lord the word was in common use among the Jews to designate those who were sent on a special mission to a foreign or a provincial synagogue about the collection of the temple tribute or other important matter; it was also the title of that official in the synagogue who was the corresponding secretary.

(d) Hence our Lord took over a term well known among the Jews in His own day and consecrated it to His service; the Twelve were selected or winnowed from the disciples to be messengers or envoys entrusted with a responsible mission.

It should be added, however, that the name apostle is not always confined to the official Twelve. Barnabas is called an apostle (Acts xiv. 14), so are certain companions of Paul, whom he calls "our brethren . . . the apostles of the churches" (2 Cor. viii. 23), and also Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25), and Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7).

(2) *Their functions and qualifications*. Mark says that the apostles were men who (a) were specially chosen by Jesus, (b) were to be with Jesus, (c) were to be sent forth by Jesus, and (d) were to have power given them to heal sicknesses and cast out devils. The first two of these qualifications were insisted on by Peter when the disciples met to choose a successor to Judas (Acts i. 15-26).

(3) *Their number and the lists given*. The apostles were *twelve* in number, doubtless with reference to the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28; Rev. xxi. 12-14). Four separate lists of the apostles are given in the New Testament:—

Matthew x. 2-4.	Mark iii. 16-19.	Luke vi. 14-16.	Acts i. 13.
Simon.	Simon.	Simon.	Peter.
Andrew.	James.	Andrew.	James.
James.	John.	James.	John.
John.	Andrew.	John.	Andrew.
Philip.	Philip.	Philip.	Philip.
Bartholomew.	Bartholomew.	Bartholomew.	Thomas.
Thomas.	Matthew.	Matthew.	Bartholomew.
Matthew.	Thomas.	Thomas.	Matthew.
James of Alphæus.	James of Alphæus.	James of Alphæus.	James of Alphæus.
Lebbæus.	Thaddæus.	Simon Zelotes.	Simon Zelotes.
Simon the Canan-æan.	Simon the Canan-æan.	Jude of James.	Jude of James.
Judas Iscariot.	Judas Iscariot.	Judas Iscariot.	

14 Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother,

In examining these lists, it is important to note :—

- (a) That the twelve names fall into three divisions of four, the first name in each division being invariably the same in all the lists. Simon heads the first division, Philip the second, and James of Alphæus the third. Simon is the first name in each list, and Judas Iscariot the last. These divisions show us that “the apostolic college was formed of three concentric circles, each less closely intimate with Jesus than the last.” This distinction of an innermost circle among the apostles, revealed in the lists, is borne out by the gospel history. The first four apostles, especially the first three, Peter, James, and John, are prominent throughout ; while of the last four no incident is recorded of James of Alphæus and Simon Zelotes ; his perplexed question (John xiv. 22) is the only reference to Jude of James ; and Judas Iscariot is the traitor.
- (b) All the apostles, except Judas Iscariot, who belonged probably to the town of Kerioth in Judea, were Galileans, and the first five came from the village of Bethsaida.
- (c) None of the lists exactly coincide, and one apostle is designated by at least three names—Jude of James, who has the two surnames Lebbæus and Thaddæus or Theudas ; none of the lists mention Nathanael (John xxi. 2), who has been identified with Bartholomew.
- (d) It has been conjectured that half of the apostles were relations of Jesus, and that many were near relations of each other ; that James and John were brothers, and were first cousins of our Lord ; Thomas, Matthew, and James of Alphæus were brothers, and were first cousins of our Lord ; Jude of James was probably son of James of Alphæus, and therefore nephew to Thomas and Matthew, and first cousin of our Lord once removed ; Peter and Andrew were brothers. For these relationships, many of which are inconsistent with each other, see notes on verses 14–16.
- (4) *Their training.* They were trained gradually for their work. Some of them had been called more than once in a special fashion to follow Jesus. Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist, had heard his first master’s witness for Jesus, and had followed Him ; the earliest call of Simon Peter, of Philip and of Nathanael, also belonged to the first weeks of our Lord’s public ministry. Peter and Andrew, James and John, had also been called from their occupation as fishers on the shores of the Sea of Galilee (see note on i. 17). From the time of their call onwards the Twelve were always with Jesus ; they heard Him preach, and saw Him work His miracles, and thus manifest forth His glory. They were taught how to work miracles themselves by getting that faith on Him which grew stronger as they lived in His presence, knew Him, and learned His love and power. They were sent short preaching journeys, and made reports to their Master. After our Lord’s resurrection He continually manifested Himself to them to teach them. At and after Pentecost they received special gifts from the Holy Spirit to fit them to be the first missionaries and the Twelve Pillars of the Church of Christ.
14. Simon or Simeon (John xxi. 16 ; Acts xv. 14), who was surnamed Peter (John i. 42), stands first on all the four lists. He belonged originally to Bethsaida (John i. 44), followed the calling of his father, John or Jonah (John i. 42,



15 James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and R. V.), who was a fisherman, and afterwards lived at Capernaum (Mark i. 16). He was brought to Jesus first by his brother Andrew in such a way as to make it evident that he was one who anxiously awaited the advent of the Messiah (John i. 41). He was called a second time while fishing on the Sea of Galilee (Mark i. 16, 17; Matt. iv. 18-20; Luke v. 1-11). He was the most prominent of the apostles during our Lord's lifetime, and continually appears so in the gospel history: when Christ is absent, it is Peter that sets off to find Him (Mark i. 36); he speaks in the name of the Twelve (Matt. xix. 27; Luke xii. 41); he answers when all are addressed (Matt. xvi. 16; Mark viii. 29); he was the first to make public confession of the Divine Messiahship of Jesus (Mark viii. 27-30); our Lord speaks to him as the chief apostle (Matt. xvi. 18; Luke xxii. 32); strangers recognised him to be the representative of the apostolic community (Matt. xvii. 24); during the planting of the Church he assumed a still more prominent position (Acts i. 15, ii. 14, iv. 8, v. 29), and was recognised in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Church as *the* apostle of the circumcision, whose work was greater than that of any other missionary save Paul. This pre-eminence was due to natural character and abilities, to his wonderful combination of adoration and activity: there is no trace of official lordship. Simon himself took official rank simply as an apostle and presbyter (1 Pet. i. 1, v. 1). His apostolic name was Peter,—the *Rock-man*. He was brother to Andrew (John i. 40).

Andrew, a native of Bethsaida, the brother of Simon Peter, whom he first brought to Jesus, had been a disciple of John the Baptist, and had heard his witness for Christ (John i. 35-42). He was the first disciple, and was with Jesus in Olivet (Mark xiii. 3). He is not very prominent, but seems to have been of a quiet and practical turn of mind, doing small things which had to be done (John vi. 8, xii. 22).

15. James the son of Zebedee, also belonging to Bethsaida (this is inferred from John i. 44, and the fact that John and James were partners with Simon and Andrew), was one of the three specially favoured apostles who were witnesses of the transfiguration (Mark ix. 2), of the raising of the daughter of Jairus (v. 37), and of other manifestations of the glory of Jesus. He appears to have been older than John, and in the *earlier* narrative receives a greater prominence. He was the first of the Twelve to receive the crown of martyrdom, and is the only apostle whose death is recorded in the New Testament. His mother was Salome, who was most probably the sister of the Virgin (compare Matt. xxvii. 56, Mark xv. 40, with John xix. 25), and therefore James and John his brother were *first cousins of our Lord*.

John, the younger son of Zebedee and Salome, but destined to take higher place than his elder brother, the author of the Gospel and of the Epistles that bear his name, and of the book of Revelation, who never names himself, but calls himself *the other disciple* (John xviii. 15, xx. 2, 3), *the disciple whom Jesus loved* (John xiii. 23, xix. 26), was perhaps the most intimate companion of Jesus (John xix. 26, 27, xiii. 23). He had been a disciple of John the Baptist; was one of the two who first followed Jesus (i. 35-40). It has been conjectured that, as his Gospel tells most about the early Judean ministry, and as he had acquaintances among the priestly aristocracy of Jerusalem, John had spent most of his time in that part of the country. Our Lord surnamed the two brothers, John and James, *Boanerges*, or Sons of Thunder, from the fiery,

Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 and Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, which

enthusiastic zeal they showed (Mark ix. 38, x. 37; Luke ix. 54). John survived all his fellow-apostles (Acts xii. 25; John xxi. 22).

Philip, a native of Bethsaida, one of the earliest disciples, and the first to whom Jesus said, *Follow me* (John i. 42, 43). The references to him are not very numerous :—at the feeding of the 5000 (John vi. 5-9); when the Greeks wished to see the Lord (John xii. 20-22); when he asked to be shown the Father (John xiv. 8).

Bartholomew, generally supposed to be the same as Nathanael, for these reasons :—John always couples Nathanael with Philip, just as Bartholomew is in the lists of apostles in the Gospels; and while the Synoptists never mention Nathanael, John never mentions Bartholomew, but inserts Nathanael instead. He belonged to Cana of Galilee (John xxi. 2); was of guileless nature (John i. 47); and was one of the seven who saw Jesus by the lake of Gennesaret after His resurrection (John xxi. 2).

Matthew, or *Levi*, the son of Alphæus or Clopas, had been a tax-gatherer (Mark ii. 14, 15, see notes), and was the author of the Gospel bearing his name. Was his father the father also of James? The conjecture is commonly adopted.

Thomas, called also Didymus (*i.e.* Twin), noted for his devotion to Jesus (John xi. 16), for his question about *the way* (John xiv. 5), for his doubt about the resurrection (John xx. 25), and for his interviews with the risen Christ (xx. 26, xxi. 2). Tradition says that Thomas was twin-brother to James the son of Alphæus, and brother also to Matthew.

James of Alphæus, or *Clopas*, had for his mother Mary (Mark xv. 40), one of the holy women who stood round the cross, and to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection (Mark xvi. 1). It has been conjectured that Mary, who was the mother of James, was the sister of the Virgin (comp. John xix. 25 with Matt. xxvii. 56, Mark xv. 40); it is also conjectured that Alphæus the father of Matthew was the same as Alphæus the father of James and the husband of Mary. Taking these *conjectures* with the legend that Thomas was the brother of James, Matthew, Thomas, and James were brothers, the nephews of the Virgin, and first cousins to our Lord. It should be noticed, however, that if Mary the mother of James was sister to the Virgin, then Salome was not; for the phrase on which the relationship is founded, "his mother's sister," cannot apply to Mary and Salome, but to one or other. If James and John were our Lord's first cousins, Matthew, Thomas, and James were not.

Simon Zelotes, Simon the Canaanite or Cananæan (Mark iii. 18; Acts i. 13), had belonged to the sect of the Zealots, a fierce secret society pledged to exterminate the Romans and traitors who joined them, and which included men of all temperaments, from the heroic leaders of Galilean revolts to the desperate sicarii, or dagger-men, who sought to accomplish their object by the secret assassination of Romans and their supporters. The apostolic company included a tax-gatherer on the one hand, and a member of a patriotic assassination league on the other.

16. Judas of James, also called Lebbæus (Matt. x. 3) and Thaddæus (Mark iii. 18), probably a son of James. The only incident recorded of Judas is his question about Christ's manifestation of Himself to His people

- 17 also was the traitor. And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear  
 18 him, and to be healed of their diseases ; and they that were  
 19 vexed with unclean spirits : and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him : for there went virtue out of him, and healed *them* all.  
 20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said,

(John xiv. 22). It is *conjectured* that James the father of Judas was James the son of Alphæus. This, added to previous conjecture, makes Judas the nephew of Thomas and Matthew, and our Lord's first cousin once removed.

Judas Iscariot, *i.e.* *Judas the man of Kerioth, Ish-Kerioth*, a native of Kerioth, a little village in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 25), the traitor, and the only disciple not a Galilean.

It should be noticed that our Lord's brethren were still hostile to Him, and that therefore none are among the Twelve ; and care should be taken to distinguish between persons with the same name. In the circle which formed the early Apostolic Church there were at least three, and perhaps four, who bore the name James :—(1) the son of Zebedee, (2) the brother of our Lord, (3) the son of Alphæus, and (4) the father of Jude, if distinct from (3).

Three Judes should also be distinguished—(1) the brother of our Lord, (2) the Apostle Jude of James, (3) Judas Iscariot.

17. A great multitude of people. Observe the wide area from which the multitudes were now gathered together :—(1) from Tyre and Sidon, in the north-west ; (2) from Judea and Jerusalem, in the south ; and, Mark (iii. 7, 8) adds, (3) from the Perea, in the south-east ; and (4) from Idumea, Herod's native land, in the far south. If scribes came from Judea and Jerusalem to stir the Galileans to persecute, hearers of the word came also. The Tyrians and Sidonians carried the news of Jesus' wonderful deeds to their homes, and inspired the Syro-Phœnician mother to persevere in seeking the help of Jesus when He visited that Gentile land.

19. The whole multitude sought to touch him. It was a crowd such as gathered at the door of Peter's house, but larger and more zealously believing. Comp. viii. 44 ; Matt. xiv. 36 ; Mark v. 30.

## 2. *The Sermon on the Mount*, 20-49 ; Matt. v.-vii.

20. And he lifted up his eyes . . . and said. Luke gives in the following verses a condensed summary of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.), which is a connected discourse on the spiritual kingdom of God, which Jesus had come to establish. It exhibits that spiritual, religious, and social revolution which Jesus had come to accomplish, and expounds the *universal* principles which underlie it ; but, like all true sermons, it was addressed to a specific audience, composed of men weighed down by an oppressive formalist religion, and by an oppressive and exacting government. Religion in our Lord's day had become a profitable profession to the Sadducees and their allies, a fanatical patriotism exhausting itself in an oppressive ceremonial to the Pharisees, and a gloomy mysticism to the Essenes. The social condition

Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.  
21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.

of Palestine was very unsatisfactory. The Roman system of taxation was the great blot on the imperial administration, and was exhausting the empire. The results were most oppressive in the eastern provinces, and Roman historians record that the burdens of taxation were producing chronic poverty with its accompaniment of rebellion. The parables of Jesus constantly reveal the impoverishment of the land and of the people. Debt abounds, and with debt usury. In one parable everybody except the king is a bankrupt; the steward is in debt to the king, and the servant to the steward (Matt. xviii. 23; Luke vii. 41). The creditor seizes the poor debtor in the street, and the judge's officer is ready to cast him into prison, where he remains till squeezed of the last farthing, or, if he has no money, till he is sold with wife and children into slavery, and payment has been made (Luke xii. 58, 59; Matt. xviii. 25). Oil and wheat, the necessities of life, are furnished on credit (Luke xvi. 6, 7); buildings are begun and remain unfinished for want of money (Luke xiv. 28-30). This general impoverishment is the soil in which flourish those who live on their neighbour's ills. The parables speak of usurers, forestallers of grain, and capitalists who grow rich on the necessities of the poor. Such was the condition of the people who now thronged Jesus to hear His discourse. Then by this time the ruling classes, whether Sadducees, Pharisees, or Herodians, had rejected Him, and had more than once conspired to take His life. We must keep all these things in mind when we read the Sermon on the Mount. The sermon divides into three parts:—(1) The call to enter the kingdom, and those to whom it is addressed (20-26); (2) a statement of the principles underlying this kingdom, and the need of sincerity in adopting them (27-45); (3) the personal basis of the kingdom (46-49).

Blessed be ye poor, etc. (i.) *The Call in four Beatitudes and four Woes.* (1) *The Beatitudes.* The blessed who are invited to enter the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world (Matt. xxv. 34) are:—(a) *the poor.* Christ's poor gathered around Him on the hillside after the scribes had anathematized Him, taught poverty of spirit by the blessings of earthly poverty (Jas. ii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 26-29); (b) *the hungry,* those whom poverty has condemned to a life of toil and privation (i. 53); and to long for something better, spiritual as well as temporal (Matt. v. 6); (c) *those that weep,* those whose grief finds outlet in sobs; for with tears shed over temporal misfortune there is easily connected the mourning of the soul for its sins; (d) *the persecuted* who have suffered four stages of persecution, who have been *hated*, as Jesus had been, *separated* or excluded from the synagogues (John ix. 34), as Jesus had been, *reproached* or violently slandered, as Jesus was when the Pharisees attributed His power to His being in league with Satan (Luke xi. 15), *cast out*, excommunicated or permanently expelled from synagogue and Temple (John xvi. 2). These were blessed because they were companions in their humiliation of the Son of Man (the Christ's humiliation title), and because they are called, as He was to be, through their humiliation to an estate of exaltation, when they shall find themselves *heirs of the kingdom*, filled with all good things, *joyous* with joy which must find expression, and companions of the saintly heroes, the prophets (Acts vii. 52) of the ancient and covenant people of God (Heb. xi. 36-38). (2) *The Woes.* Our Lord cries woe against those who had beforehand rejected the invitation to enter the



- 22 Blessed *are ye* that weep now : for ye shall laugh. Blessed  
 are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate  
 you *from their company*, and shall reproach *you*, and cast out  
 23 your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in  
 that day, and leap for joy ; for, behold, your reward *is* great  
 in heaven : for in the like manner did their fathers unto the  
 24 prophets. But woe unto you that are rich ! for ye have  
 25 received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full ! for  
 ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now ! for ye shall  
 26 mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak  
 well of you ! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.  
 27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do  
 28 good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and

kingdom :—(a) the *rich*, the priest-nobles who had already condemned Him to death (John v. 18), and the scribes of the Pharisees who were plotting against Him in Galilee (Mark iii. 6) ; (b) *those that are full*, those who live luxuriously and care little for their brethren ; (c) those that *laugh* now in careless enjoyment ; and (d) those who live in the full tide of social prosperity. They *have to the full* in this life (Phil. iv. 18). They will yet know what it is to hunger and to mourn—a reference probably to the calamities which overtook the governing classes at the siege of Jerusalem. They are in the same terrible position that the false prophets occupied (Jer. v. 31 ; Isa. xxx. 10 ; 1 Kings xxii. 11). Canon Farrar notes the resemblances between the Epistle of James and this portion of Christ's sermon (Jas. i. 2, 4, 5, 9, 20 ; ii. 13, 14, 17, 18 ; iv. 4, 10, 11 ; v. 10, 12).

27. Love your enemies. (ii.) *The law of love which is the fundamental principle of the kingdom of heaven.* This law or principle of Christian love is enforced in a fivefold way. Jesus gives various striking modes in which this love *manifests* itself (27–30). He then shows what common *definition* can be gathered from these instances (31), and how this love is *distinct* from other kinds (32–35). He explains that it is a love *akin to God's way* of loving (35, 36) ; and lastly He shows that this principle of love should influence all our *judgments* (37–45). (1) *Manifestations of Christian love.* (a) In its *active form of love.* In the midst of the hatred which will surround the disciples of Jesus they *love their enemies*. This injunction had been part of the Mosaic law (Ex. xxiii. 4 ; and Prov. xxv. 21), but it had always been limited by the Old Testament definition of neighbour, *the children of thy people* (Lev. xix. 18), and not a few passages of Old Testament Scripture seemed to limit the command still further (Deut. vii. 2, xxiii. 6 ; Josh. vi. 21 ; 2 Sam. xii. 31). Jesus frees the command from all limitations, and shows that love to our enemies should manifest itself in the whole round of active life : *in deeds*—in *doing good* to them that *hate us* ; in *words*—in *blessing* them that *curse us* ; in *prayer*—in *praying for* them who subject us to coarse insults (1 Pet. iii. 16—*falsely accuse*). The Christian is to answer exhibitions of hatred by manifestations of active love (Rom. xii. 20, 21). (b) In its *passive form of enduring evil with patience*, whatever is demanded of us in the way of personal indignity or loss of property.



29 pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat  
 30 also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him  
 31 that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.  
 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for  
 33 sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners  
 34 also do even the same. And if ye lend *to them* of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to  
 35 sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.  
 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

29. Unto him that smiteth thee, etc. "The general principle, 'resist not evil' (Matt. v. 39; 1 Cor. vi. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 19-23), impressed for ever on the memory and conscience of mankind by a striking paradox. That it is only meant as a paradox in its *literal* sense is shown by the fact that our Lord Himself, while most divinely true to its *spirit*, did not act on the letter of it (John xviii. 22, 23)" (Farrar).

Cloke . . . coat. The *cloke* was the outer garment, the *abbas*, shaped like a Highland plaid; the *coat* was the under tunic.

30. Give to every man that asketh. The general principle underlying the four commands in vers. 29, 30 is that *love* or *charity* is not to stop because human patience may be exhausted, it is to be as infinite in its self-denial as God is. Love is to know no limits *save those that love imposes*. Love or charity must be *thoughtful*, or it may injure rather than benefit.

31. As ye would, etc. (2) *The definition of Christian love*. This description of love, which our Lord called the sum of the Law and the Prophets, and which is frequently called the *Golden Rule*, may be contrasted with its rabbinical counterpart. *What is disagreeable to thyself, do not to thy neighbours*, said the Rabbins: *Whatsoever thou desirest for thyself, that do to thy neighbour*, Christ says. Treat your neighbour as your other self.

32. If ye love them, etc. (3) *The distinctive mark of Christian love is disinterestedness*, which can include an object entirely opposed to it in nature, character, and aim, and whose standard is high above what is imposed by the customs and laws which prevail in the world. Sinners (*Publicans*, says Matthew) can love with covert selfishness, and such selfish love is quite in accord with the non-Christian principle of retaliation. The Christian love which hopes for nothing in return "comes out very clearly on this dark background of ordinary benevolence."

35. Hoping for nothing again. *Never despairing, or despairing of no man*, recognising the boundless possibilities for good which the gospel of Christ has procured for every one, even the most hopelessly lost.

And your reward, etc. (4) *Christian love is akin to God's love*. The

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged : condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned : forgive, and ye shall be forgiven :  
 38 give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete  
 39 withal it shall be measured to you again. And he spake a parable unto them : Can the blind lead the blind ? shall they  
 40 not both fall into the ditch ? The disciple is not above his master : but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.  
 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?  
 42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's  
 43 eye. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit ; neither  
 44 doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is

love with which God loves is the model and source of Christian love. God loves in a thoroughly disinterested way, of free grace, and if we can love in some such fashion, our reward will be that we participate in the life and glory of God, who is the Father of Mercies (2 Cor. i. 3 ; comp. Jas. v. 11 ; Col. iii. 12).

37. Judge not, etc. (5) *Christian love is the principle of all good judgments and actions.* It makes men *refrain from passing judgment*, and be patient in thinking well of others ; it makes them prompt to do well. *Love restrains* from hasty judgment of our neighbours, from pitiless condemnation, from withholding pardon. Love is anxious to find a neighbour innocent rather than guilty (Rom. ii. 1-3, xiv. 10 ; 1 Cor. iv. 3-5 ; Matt. xviii. 23-35). In all cases let the Christian give his neighbour the benefit of a doubt, give in the fullest measure. "Give with a full hand to God, and He will give with a full hand to you." It is only those who can see the boundless possibilities in fellow-men who can be moral leaders or teachers. He who does not look with love cannot see ; but those who follow Jesus, and look on men with His eyes of love, are on the road to reach nearness to God.

41. And why beholdest thou, etc. The restraining power of love is enforced by the parable of the mote and the beam—a common Jewish figure. The hypocrite *sees at a glance* the mote or speck of dust in his neighbour's eye, but not even *patient observation* can make him discern a great piece of wood in his own eye. The eye must be full of light ere we can see clearly, and when we condemn others, who are ourselves in the wrong, we prove not their faults but our own (Rom. ii. 1).

43. For a good tree. (6) *Love makes men prompt to influence others for good.* The fruits are the results of a man's influence on others. In order to act on others for good, we must be good ourselves, else example will paralyze our teaching.

known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather  
 45 figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man  
 out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which  
 is good ; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart  
 bringeth forth that which is evil : for of the abundance of the  
 heart his mouth speaketh.

46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things  
 47 which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my  
 sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like :  
 48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and  
 laid the foundation on a rock : and when the flood arose, the  
 stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not  
 49 shake it ; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that  
 heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a founda-  
 tion built an house upon the earth ; against which the stream  
 did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell ; and the ruin  
 of that house was great.

46. And why call ye me Lord? (iii.) *The personal basis of the kingdom.* Jesus claims to be the Messiah, and His words show that many had acknowledged Him to be the Christ. True discipleship consists in that obedience which implies rest on Jesus implicitly. He is the basis and foundation of the life in the kingdom (John xiii. 17 ; Jas. i. 22).

48. He is like a man, etc. *He is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock ; and when a flood (an inundation, the sudden rush of a spate) arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it ; because it had been well builded. . . . against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in ; and the ruin of that house was great.* The parables or vivid pictures with which Jesus illustrates the truths of His sermon were all familiar Palestine scenes. The blind beggar led by the hand, the mote and the beam, fruit-trees with good and bad fruit, the fruit-gardens, with vines and figs, not thorns and thistles, and the two houses. The last picture is very vividly sketched. "On the shelving lands which surround the Lake of Gennesareth there are some hills on which the rock is covered with only a thin layer of earth (Luke) or sand (Matthew). A prudent man digs through this moveable soil, and keeps digging deep till he gets to the rock, upon and in which he lays the foundation" (Godet). The land is liable to sudden waterspouts, which break on the summits of the mountains, and create torrents that carry away in the rush of waters the layer of sand or earth, and buildings that are not founded in the rock. The foundations collapse, and the buildings *fall in*. "A single lost soul is a great ruin in the eyes of God" (Godet). The rock is Christ (1 Cor. x. 4).

CHAP. VII. 1 Now, when he had ended all his sayings in the  
 2 audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a  
 3 certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick,  
 4 and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto  
 5 him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would  
 6 come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus,  
 7 they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for  
 whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he  
 hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them.  
 And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion  
 sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thy-  
 self; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my  
 roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come

VI. THIRD SOJOURN AT CAPERNAUM, VII. 1-10; MATT. VIII. 5-13.

*Cure of a Centurion's Servant.*

2. **A centurion's servant, slave.** The Roman army was divided into legions, which, when at full strength, contained each 6000 men, and were commanded by six tribunes (*chief captain*, Acts xxi. 31), who ruled in turns. The legion was divided into ten cohorts (*bands*, Acts x. 1), the cohort into three maniples, and the maniple into two centuries. The commander of a century was a *centurion*. This centurion was probably in Herod's army.

**Dear, precious.** Expressing primarily *value* rather than *affection*.

**Ready to die.** At the point of death.

3. **He sent unto Him.** He was a stranger, ignorant of the ways of Jewish Rabbis, and so he got men who knew all about the etiquette of Judaism to speak for him—a lifelike picture of soldierly straightforwardness.

**The elders.** The college or kirk-session who ruled over every Jewish synagogue (congregation).

4. **Instantly, earnestly, or urgently.**

5. **He loveth our nation.** The centurion was probably a proselyte of the gate, one who believed in the Scriptures and kept the Jewish hours of prayer, like Cornelius, without having been circumcised.

**A synagogue.** The *synagogue*, probably the only one in Capernaum. It was a common thing for wealthy Gentiles who were Jewish proselytes to build synagogues, send costly gifts to the Temple, or lavish alms to poor Jews in Judea.

6. **Sent friends.** A second deputation; for the more he thought of it, the more troubled he was how to receive such a mysterious visitor. If Jesus was actually coming to his house, ought he not to go out to receive Him? and how could he receive with due honour such a guest at such a time? "The centurion did not think himself worthy to visit Christ, yet Christ thought him worthy to be visited by Him."

**Lord.** The word may only mean "Sir" (John iv. 19, xii. 21; Acts xvi. 30); but it must have meant more to the centurion; how much more it is impossible to tell.

unto thee ; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers ; and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain ; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had

7. Say in a word, as Thou didst at Cana of Chuza's son (John iv. 46-54). *Speak the word only* (Matt. viii. 8), as if it were nothing to Jesus.

8. A man set under authority. He explains what he means, according to his soldier life. He stands under authority, and is set in authority over others, and he knows what becomes authority. When he is ordered, "in a word" he obeys ; when he "speaks the word only," he is obeyed. Jesus is in that invisible world what he is in the century—a word is enough, the discipline of the host of unseen powers will do the rest.

9. Jesus . . . marvelled. It was our Lord's turn to be amazed, for He saw a miracle in this man's faith. Jesus marvelled a second time, but it was at faithlessness (Mark vi. 6).

I have not found so great faith, etc. "He had found in the wild olive what he had not found in the olive tree" (Augustine).

10. Whole, *healed or convalescent*.

## VII. THIRD PREACHING JOURNEY IN GALILEE, VII. 11-VIII. 3.

### 1. *Jesus at Nain—the Widow's Son*, vii. 11-17.

11. Nain, lying in the north-western edge of Little Hermon, where the ground falls into the plain of Esdraelon, in one of the most beautiful and fruitful parts of Palestine, whose neighbourhood was full of historic memories.

Many of His disciples, etc. *And His disciples went with Him, and a great multitude*, for in the earlier portion of this year of popularity Jesus seems to have been generally surrounded by an adoring crowd. Nain is about twenty-five miles from Capernaum, and the road goes over the shoulder of the ridge of Tabor.

12. A dead man carried out. Nain is reached by a narrow, rocky path, and the processions must have met there : Jesus and the crowd around Him going into the town, the funeral company, with the dead man in their midst, going out of the town to the rock sepulchres on the hill-side.

The only son, etc. A childless widow is always the type of hopeless sorrow ; and among the Jews was looked on as a sinner who had received special punishment.

13. The Lord. This is one of the few instances in which Jesus is called



- 14 compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier : and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.  
 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he  
 16 delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all ; and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen  
 17 up among us ; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.  
 18 And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.  
 19 And John calling *unto him* two of his disciples, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come ? or look we for

*Lord* before the resurrection. Comp. Luke x. 1, xi. 39, xii. 42, xvii. 5, 6, etc.

He had compassion, etc. "Jesus, who was always touched by the sight of human agony (Mark vii. 34, viii. 12), seems to have felt peculiar compassion for the anguish of bereavement (John xi. 33-37)." His sympathy was a real sharing others' sorrows, and this miracle, springing from His infinite compassion, is one instance of the power of God controlled by the love of Jesus. He made the mother's grief His own. The shadow of Calvary extends to the gate of Nain.

14. Touched the bier, making Himself ceremonially unclean. Sympathy manifesting itself in word (*Weep not*), in deed (*touching the bier*), and in power (*Arise*). The narrative shows that this was a strictly Jewish funeral. The corpse lay wrapt in winding-sheet and swathing bands (John xi. 44, xx. 6, 7), with the napkin on the face, upon a flat, open bier.

16. A great prophet. This was the first time that Jesus had raised the dead. It was a miracle such as Elijah had done, only wrought in a more striking way. The people inferred that He was a prophet of the same order.

God hath visited His people. The phrase with which Zacharias welcomed his prophet-child John (i. 68). God had restored the long-lost prophetic order, and Messianic times were nigh.

## 2. Message from John in Prison, 18-23 ; Matt. xi. 2-6.

18. The disciples of John shewed him. John was in prison at Makor, or Machærus, but he must have been allowed to see visitors, and his disciples told him about the wonderful deeds of Jesus in Galilee. John wondered. If Jesus was doing so much, why did He not do more? Why did He not appear the Messiah in power? Why did He not deliver him, His Forerunner?

19. Art Thou He that should come? *Art Thou He that cometh? the Coming One.* Hope deferred was making his heart sick ; imprisonment was telling upon him. He was inclined to complain, as Jeremiah had done, that God had deceived him (Jer. xx. 7). "Alternations between wonderful exaltation and sudden depression are characteristic of all the men of the old covenant" (Godet). The dungeon had been to John what the wilderness of the temptation had been to Jesus ; but the result had been different : John had partially fallen. Imprisonment and impatience had impoverished his faith ; but it was not doubt, only wavering faith.

- 20 another? When the men were come unto him, they said,  
 John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that  
 21 should come, or look we for another? And in the same  
 hour he cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of  
 evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind he gave sight.  
 22 Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell  
 John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the  
 blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf  
 hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.  
 23 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.  
 24 And when the messengers of John were departed, he began  
 to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out  
 into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?  
 25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft  
 raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and  
 26 live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out  
 for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much  
 27 more than a prophet. This is *he* of whom it is written,

21. And in that same hour. Jesus was in the midst of a great crowd of diseased people healing them, and He let the disciples of the Baptist see His work. Then He told them to carry back a description of what they had seen.

22. How that the blind, etc. *The blind*, etc. The message is given in the words of Isa. xxxv. 4-6, lx. 1-3. Gospel facts are a surer way of reaching souls than explanations of difficulties. Preaching to the poor, the spiritual miracle, comes last, as if it were the most wonderful and the most convincing evidence of the dawn of the Messianic kingdom.

23. Blessed is *he*, etc. *Blessed is he who shall find none occasion of stumbling in me* (Isa. viii. 14). A solemn warning to John, to the disciples, and to the multitude.

### 3. *Jesus on John the Baptist*, 24-35; Matt. xi. 7-19.

24. When the messengers of John were departed. Jesus waits till they are gone, for His tenderness wishes to spare His Forerunner (ver. 28).

A reed shaken with the wind. Observe the climax—a reed—a man—a prophet—more than a prophet—the greatest of the prophets.

25. Clothed in soft raiment. Jesus contrasts the mantle of camel's hair and the leathern girdle with the gorgeous apparel which the effeminate Herods wore. John was a man.

In kings' courts. In palaces such as the Herods were famous for building, and such as could be seen at Tiberias, Cæsarea Philippi, and Jerusalem.

26. More than a prophet (Luke xx. 26). Jesus looks back at the long line of prophecy which preceded Him, and finds in His immediate predecessor a unique prophet, the only prophet whose advent had been foretold, and who was the greatest of the prophets because His Forerunner.

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall  
 28 prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among  
 those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet  
 than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of  
 29 God is greater than he. And all the people that heard *him*,  
 and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the  
 30 baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the  
 counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.  
 31 And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men  
 32 of this generation? and to what are they like? They are  
 like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one  
 to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have  
 not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.  
 33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking

27. Behold, I send my messenger (i. 76). St. Matthew tells that Jesus called John the Elijah that was to come (Matt. xi. 14).

28. He that is least in the kingdom of Heaven. "The least of His disciples, rejoicing in His presence, in communion with Him, in His revelation of the Father, though less than John in fame, with the rigour of severe holiness, was set above him in the knowledge of the truth, and therefore in blessedness and joy" (Plumptre). John was a servant, but these in the kingdom are children. The meanest of those that follow the Lamb are in a more honourable place than the greatest of these who have gone before, and greater privileges mean greater responsibilities.

29. All the people. Christ's poor, who gathered round Him to hear the gospel, as opposed to the Pharisees and lawyers who came to criticize or to ensnare. The people who received Jesus had received John, and been baptized by him.

Justified God. *Proclaimed by word and deed the excellence of God's ways for the salvation of men.* The phrase must be explained in connection with the words in ver. 30 (*rejected the counsel of God against themselves*), and in ver. 35 (*wisdom is justified of her children*). The people who had accepted the baptism of John and were followers of Jesus, though neither rich nor learned, were evidence of God's power and righteousness.

30. Rejected the counsel of God, etc. *Frustrated by word and deed God's way of salvation in their own case* (Gal. ii. 21). Man cannot foil God's plan for the world, but he may render it vain for himself. Jesus declares that John's ministry had a double result:—(a) A general movement among the lower classes of the people who heard the prophet and revered him; (b) an open opposition on the part of the rulers who guided the destiny of the nation.

32. Like unto children. Another simple, vivid parable drawn from a most familiar scene. He imagines two groups of children, one sullen, who will neither play at one game or another. The petted children are like the leaders of the Jewish people who would listen neither to Jesus nor to John.

33. Neither eating bread, etc. *Eating no bread and drinking no wine.* John was an ascetic, gloomy and stern. The Pharisees and Sadducees

34 wine ; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking ; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, 35 and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners ! But wisdom is justified of all her children.

36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat 37 down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the 38 Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and

called his asceticism demoniacal possession. Jesus was full of genial, tender humanity. He was called a glutton and a wine-drinker. This is a striking example of the malevolent judgment that Jesus had shortly before warned His disciples against (vi. 37).

35. But wisdom is justified, etc. *And wisdom is justified of all her children.* Those who are spiritually-minded, the divinely wise, recognise the wisdom of God both in the asceticism of John and in the loving mercy of Jesus. Wisdom's children, in whatever else they may differ, all agree in regarding with complacency all the various methods of divine grace, knowing that they all work towards the same divine end—the salvation of men.

#### 4. *Dinner at the house of Simon the Pharisee, 36–50.*

36. One of the Pharisees. The man's name was Simon. He cannot be identified with Simon the leper.

That he would eat with him. A patronizing invitation to the village carpenter whom crowds followed, given by a man on whom Jesus made some impression, and who yet hesitated to receive Him as an equal, still less as an honoured friend. Jesus accepted the invitation. He went everywhere to do good.

Sat down. *Reclined on the couch.* The Jews in earlier days had, like other Orientals, sat cross-legged when eating, but the Greek and Roman supremacy had made the mode of reclining at table the usual one. The small table was surrounded by three sloping couches, on which the guests lay with their feet towards the wall. The customs of the time permitted strangers to enter the court-yard, and even the room where the feast was held. See notes on v. 30.

37. A woman in the city, etc. *A woman which was in the city, a sinner,* or perhaps *a woman who was a sinner in the city.* She must have been a well-known and notorious harlot, and her presence was in defiance of all rules and proprieties of life ; but the context implies that it was her one way of seeing and speaking to Jesus (*when she knew*). She may have heard His sermons, or seen His miracles of love, or been softened by a look from the Master.

An alabaster box. *An alabastron.* Small vases or flasks for holding rare ointments or perfumes were manufactured at Alabastron, in Egypt, out of a stone found in the neighbourhood, and in consequence the word *alabaster* or *alabastron* came to be used of all vessels for holding scents, wherever made or of whatever material.

Of ointment. Probably very costly ointment, perfume used by persons who lived a luxurious life of sin (Prov. vii. 17 ; Isa. iii. 24). She brought it,



stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is*

40 that toucheth him ; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.

41 And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence,

42 and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them

43 will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him,

44 Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she

as the Ephesian soothsayers brought their books of charms (Acts xix. 19), which had been destined for a wicked purpose, to lay it at the feet of Jesus in token of repentance and honest endeavour after a new life.

38. Stood at His feet, etc. *And standing behind at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet*, etc. The picture is singularly graphic and pathetic. The unhappy woman, impelled to thank Jesus, has made her way into the house, and got behind Jesus, like the sick lady in Capernaum (viii. 44), near where His feet lay extended on the couch. But when she got near, her situation, memories of past life and of the Saviour's compassion, overcame her, and she sobbed aloud. Her tears fell on Jesus' feet. She impulsively wiped them off with the ends of her long hair, which, in her nervousness, had been allowed to fall in disorder on her shoulders, then, with sudden impetuosity of love, she kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment, and would have gone had not Jesus restrained her.

39. The Pharisee was scandalized at the unseemly scene made by this disreputable woman, but, contemptuously polite, said nothing. He decided in his mind that Jesus could be no prophet, or He would not have permitted a well-known notorious prostitute to approach Him. The Jewish Rabbis had abundant contempt for all women, and would not have suffered a sinful woman to come near them. But Jesus, here and elsewhere, made Himself of no reputation to save lost souls.

40. Jesus answered. He heard the Pharisee thinking.

41. Five hundred pence. A "penny" was the average day's wage for a working man. Taking it as worth about 2s. 6d., the debts were £62, 10s. and £6, 5s. respectively.

42. Frankly forgave, *freely remitted*, remission by free grace.

43. I suppose. Somewhat contemptuously.

44. Simon, seest thou this woman? The Pharisee was made to look at her—the sinner and the self-righteous face to face and before the Saviour.



hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs  
 45 of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman since  
 46 the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head  
 with oil thou didst not anoint : but this woman hath anointed  
 47 my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins,  
 which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much : but to  
 48 whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little. And he said  
 49 unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat  
 with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that  
 50 forgiveth sins also ? And he said to the woman, Thy faith  
 hath saved thee ; go in peace.

Jesus was deeply moved. Farrar has pointed out that His speech is a rhythmic chant, expressive of His emotion :—

“ Into thine house I entered,  
 Water upon my feet thou gavest not,” etc.

He contrasted the behaviour of the two—the woman full of anguish and love, whose penitence had made her violate all propriety ; and the Pharisee, whose ostentatious patronage to an inferior had permitted him to omit acts of courtesy due to every guest. Water to pour on the feet was offered to almost every guest (John xiii. 4, 5 ; Gen. xviii. 4 ; Judg. xix. 21 ; 1 Tim. v. 10) ; the kiss of peace was a customary mark of respect with which a Rabbi was greeted ; an exceptionally honoured guest would have had his head anointed with oil. None of these acts of courtesy had been done by the respectable Pharisee. But the sinful woman, in her almost hysterical thanksgiving, had given tears, the most precious of water ; had kissed the feet ; had anointed the feet with ointment.

47. **For she loved much.** It was her faith that won the pardon ; but an emotion is often a complex state. Faith and love mingled together, great faith and much love. Her faith “worked by love,” and won her forgiveness. Deep sense of sin, strong impulsive conviction, awakened her great love. “What the best of us need in order to love much is not sin, but the knowledge of it” (Godet). Simon was a sinner as well as the woman, but he did not know it, and therefore loved little.

49. **Began to say within themselves.** The respectable company at table, who had been already scandalized by the scene, were shocked at the saying. They kept silent, however ; there had been enough of noise, they thought.

50. **Thy faith hath saved thee.** She had remained standing or kneeling, and the Lord gently relieves her from her embarrassing position—for, with the touch of Jesus, all the womanly in her had come back, and she scarce dared think of the mad impulse that had driven her to the feet of Jesus. She was glad she had come, but she longed to get away and hide herself in solitude. Jesus dismissed her. A spiritual miracle had been worked because she had had faith, which must be present at every miracle, spiritual or physical.

**Go in peace. Go into peace.** Let peace be the haven in which henceforth you may rest.

Luke alone records this pathetic incident, an instance of how he delights to

CHAP. VIII. 1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God : and the twelve *were*  
 2 with him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of  
 3 whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

dwell on our Lord's tenderness towards women. Perhaps, like many other noble-minded physicians, he had sympathy with weaker suffering womanhood, and delighted to point out how the Saviour everywhere departed from the common Oriental habit of degrading womanhood, and how the Gospel was to elevate womanhood all the world over.

5. *Preaching in the Villages—the Ministry of Women*, viii. 1-3.

1. **Every city and village.** A wide circuit ; the twelve probably going before to prepare for Jesus' work, and the devout women preparing for the reception and support of the Rabbi and His disciples.

2. **Certain women.** Jewish scribes regarded women with the contempt common to most Oriental sages. No woman was allowed to come closer to a Rabbi than four cubits' distance. Jesus' disciples were astonished during His early ministry to see Him speak with a woman (John iv. 27). This ministry of devout women, evidently of the wealthier classes, must have created a sensation in Palestine. It was the custom among Jewish women to contribute to the support of Rabbis whom they revered, and traces of the same usage appear in 2 Kings iv. 10 ; but this ministry of women meant much more. It marks the beginning of that removal of the degradation of woman which Christianity has to a large extent, but not fully, accomplished. Luke alone records the fact, but Matthew (xxvii. 55, 56) and Mark (xv. 41) refer to it.

**Mary**, that was called Magdalene, *i.e.* from the town of Magdala. There is no warrant for identifying Mary Magdalene with the nameless "sinner" of the previous chapter. She is first mentioned here among a band of women, mostly wealthy, who, in gratitude for deliverance from disease, minister to Christ of their substance. She had been terribly afflicted by demoniacal possession ; and, set free from her misery, she seems to have consecrated her life to Jesus. She was among the women who accompanied Him from Galilee on His last journey to Jerusalem ; she stood near Him at the foot of the cross (Mark xv. 40, 41) ; she watched to see where the body of Jesus was laid (Luke xxiii. 55) ; she went to the sepulchre to find it empty (Mark xvi. 2, 5) ; Jesus appeared to her first (John xx. 14, 15).

3. **Joanna**, the wife of Chuza, was with Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre (Luke xxiii. 10).

**Chuza**. Herod's steward or chamberlain. Supposed by some to be the nobleman whose son was healed when Jesus was at Cana.

**Susanna**. We know nothing more about her.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were  
5 come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable : a

VIII. FOURTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, VIII. 4-21 ;

MATT. XIII. 2-23 ; MARK IV. 1-26.

1. *Parables of the Kingdom.*

(a) *The Sower*, 5-15.

4. A parable. The word means—(1) in classical Greek, (a) a placing together, (b) a comparison, and (c) the simplest argument from analogy ; (2) in Hellenistic Greek, what the Jews called *marshal*, or similitude. Hence the word parable is used (1) in the Old Testament for

(a) *A very short proverb*, 1 Sam. x. 12. "Therefore it became a *parable*, Is Saul also among the prophets?"

(b) *A dark prophetic utterance*, Num. xxiii. 7-10. "And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel," etc.

(c) *An enigmatic maxim*, Ps. lxxviii. 2. "I will open my mouth in a parable : I will utter dark sayings of old."

(d) *A metaphor expanded into a narrative*, Ezek. xx. 49. "Doth he not speak parables?"

(2) In the New Testament for

(a) *A short, pithy saying*, Luke iv. 23 ; Mark vii. 17.

(b) *The figurative character of the Levitical ordinances*, Heb. ix. 8, 9. "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing : which is a parable."

(c) *A mere comparison without narrative*, Mark xiii. 28. "Now from the fig-tree learn her parable."

(d) *An earthly story with a heavenly meaning*, as the parables of our Lord (Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*).

The parables of our Lord differ from *fables* by their higher spiritual aim and the natural character of their incidents ; from *myths* by their truthfulness ; from *proverbs* by their expanded form ; from *allegories* in being complete and yet not always self-interpreting. Parables have always been popular in the East. The Rabbis commonly began to teach the young disciples in parables. Our Lord reversed their method. He began by the simple words of the Sermon on the Mount, then a change came, and He spoke in parable when He found the hard-heartedness of the people. A Master of the hidden truth, Jesus knew how to make the doctrine of the kingdom touch the mind and thrill the heart of the people, by means of the forms and figures which the lake and the land made familiar to them. "The lake gave Him the picture of casting the net, which at every throw collected a quantity of fishes, good and bad ; . . . the shore, the oasis with rich black mould . . . here the rocky ground of the hill ranges and the crumbling basalt rocks of the lake-shore, there the irrepressible tropical luxuriance of weeds, and the plunderings of numberless birds. The road which meandered by the lake suggested the seed-corn trodden down by the wayside or fruitlessly sprouting, and the pearls which the passing merchant had brought from Arabia and Persia by Damascus to Galilee. Jesus had musingly watched the

sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside ; and it was trodden down, and the  
 6 fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock ;  
 and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because  
 7 it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns ; and the  
 8 thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

wife or maiden busily mixing with skilful hand the wheaten meal and the leaven. As He looked at all these material things, He added to them the spiritual leaven, and presented when need arose His nervous pictures before His people as their most nourishing bread " (Keim).

5. A sower. Mark tells us that the parable was spoken from a boat, and it is most likely that Jesus described a scene visible at the moment to the people gathered to listen to Him. "In the fields close to the shore may be seen the hard-beaten paths, into which no seed can penetrate ; the flights of innumerable birds ready to pick it up ; the rocks thinly covered with soil, and the stony ground ; the dense, tangled growth of weeds and thistles ; and the rich, deep loam on which the harvests grew with unwonted luxuriance " (Farrar).

His seed. There is the *same* sower, and the *same* seed ; the soil differs.

The wayside. The hard footpath which led through the field. The graphic touch, "*and it was trodden down*," occurs in Luke only.

6. A rock. Mark says "*on stony ground* ;" Matthew, upon "*stony places*." They dwell on the lack of root, while Luke notes the lack of moisture. "It is not a soil mingled with stones that is meant here ; for these, however numerous or large, would not certainly hinder the roots from striking deeply downward, as these roots, with the instinct they possess, would feel and find their way, penetrating between the interstices of the stones, and would so reach the moisture below ; but what is meant is ground where a thin superficial coating of mould covered the face of a rock which stretched below it, and formed an impassable barrier, rendering it wholly impossible that the roots should penetrate beyond a certain depth, or draw up any supplies of nourishment from beneath " (Trench).

7. Thorns. Travellers tell us that in the hot valleys on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, where the soil is good, thorns and thistles grow rapidly and luxuriantly. No horse can break through their tangled brakes. The common Oriental custom was to burn them down before sowing the seed ; but the roots often remained. Among these roots some of the seed fell ; they grew up with it and choked the young corn. "Thorns are a good guard to the corn when they are in the hedge, but a bad inmate when they are in the field " (M. Henry).

8. On good ground, lit. *on the good ground*. The different results imply different degrees of fertility. The hundredfold was probably the common expression for an unusually good crop. "Then Isaac sowed in that land and received in that same year an *hundredfold* ; and the Lord blessed him " (Gen. xxvi. 12). There is one degree of unfruitfulness, and three causes of unfruitfulness ; there is one *cause* of fruitfulness, and three *degrees* of fruitfulness.

He that hath ears to hear. The usual rabbinical phrase for calling the



9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this  
 10 parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the  
 mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ;  
 that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not  
 11 understand. Now the parable is this : The seed is the word  
 12 of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear ; then

attention of their scholars to something of special importance. Our Lord uses it on *six* occasions :—(1) “And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come. He that hath ears,” etc. (Matt. xi. 14, 15); (2) “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears,” etc. (Matt. xiii. 43); (3) In this passage; (4) “Neither was anything secret, but that it should come to light. He that hath ears,” etc. (Mark iv. 23); (5) Mark vii. 16, but omitted in the Revised Version; (6) “Salt, therefore, is good; but if even the salt have lost its savour . . . He that hath ears,” etc. (Luke xiv. 34, 35).

10. *Mystery*. That inner reality or kernel of spiritual truth, which the multitude did not like to think of, and which Christ has made a revealed secret. A *mystery* was something into which *disciples* were *initiated*, and which was, therefore, as well known to them as it was hidden from others. The modern use of the word is quite different from its New Testament meaning. With us it is used to imply something we do not now, and never can, understand; in the New Testament it always means something *once* hidden, but now revealed (Col. i. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. xi. 25, 26; Rev. xvii. 5). The disciples were initiated into the *mystery* of the kingdom, and knew it; outsiders did not know it.

That seeing, etc. A double illustration drawn from the two senses of sight and hearing, and conveying a confessedly difficult idea, which is made the more difficult by the clause added in Mark, *lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them*. The clause suggests that parables were a means of preventing the gospel of the kingdom being known, and that they were used as such. The clause in Matthew, *because seeing they see not*, however, shows that what is really in our Lord's mind is the fact that many of His hearers will not, as a matter of fact, either perceive or understand, although they are seeing and hearing His deeds and words. When Peter and John came to the sepulchre, they both *saw* the empty tomb, but only John *saw* that this meant a risen Saviour. The whole multitude to whom Christ spoke His parable followed His gestures, and heard His words; but whether they were able to perceive and understand His meaning depended on the way that they saw and heard. Matthew quotes a similar deadening effect of Old Testament prophecy on the Israelites in the days of Isaiah (Matt. xiii. 13-15; comp. Isa. vi. 9, 10). Prophecy and parable are meant to be blessings, but, like all misused blessings, they may and do become curses; for they have a hardening effect on those that carelessly hear them. “Unwillingness to see is punished by incapacity of seeing. The natural punishment of spiritual perversity is spiritual blindness.”

11. *The seed is the word of God*. A common metaphor: comp. Col. i. 5, 6; 1 Cor. iii. 6; Jas. i. 21.

12. *Those by the wayside*. There is a wayside where the word is sown, the hardened hearers, hardened by a dull familiarity with divine things, or by



cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their  
 13 hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the  
 rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with  
 joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and  
 14 in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among  
 thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and  
 are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life,  
 15 and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good  
 ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having  
 heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.  
 16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a

worldliness, or by evil habits of life. "The wayside is the heart beaten and dried by the passage of evil thoughts" (Hugh of St. Victor). "If we break not up the fallow ground, by preparing our hearts for the word, and humbling them to it, and engaging our own attention; and if we cover not the seed afterwards by meditation and prayer; . . . we are as the highway" (Matt. Henry).

**Taketh away.** "*Snatcheth*, Matt. xiii. 19. It is done in a moment: by a smile at the end of the sermon; by a silly criticism at the church door; by foolish gossip on the way home. These are the *fowls of the air* whom the Evil One uses in this task" (Farrar).

13. **They on the rock.** The metaphor suddenly changes, and the hearers become the seed. The stony-ground hearers have shallow, impulsive natures. They exhibit rapid change, strong emotion, a quicker show of saving change than is real. They receive the word with joy, as Herod heard John (Mark vi. 20), but have no persistence. The verses are a warning against attempting to produce real conversion of souls by mere excitement. When anything comes to test the moral nature, they are offended, *i.e.* they stumble, or are tripped up. They have no root in themselves, and religion must be a personal matter; it cannot be forced on by religious machinery from without.

14. **And that which fell among thorns.** There is some depth of earth and some root, and perhaps some promise of fruitfulness in the green blade; for the thorns are underground when the seed is sown. "This went farther than the other, for it had root . . . but the good gained by the word is insensibly overcome and overborne by the things of this world. Prosperity destroys the word in the heart, as much as persecution does, and more dangerously because more silently; the stones spoiled the root, the thorns spoil the fruit" (Matt. Henry). Our Lord instances three kinds of thorns, *cares, riches, and pleasures*.

15. **That on the good ground.** The one mark which distinguishes the seed sown on good ground is fruitfulness springing from tenacity; according to old theologians, the sign of having saving faith was doing good works (Jas. ii. 18). There is a growth in well-doing—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; and there is variety in well-doing—some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold; but the growth is making for the fruit, and there is always some fruit-bearing.

(b) *The Lamp*, 16-18; Mark iv. 21-24.

16. **No man**, etc. *And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it*

vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed ; but setteth *it* on a candle-  
 17 stick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing  
 is secret that shall not be made manifest ; neither *any thing*  
 18 hid that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed  
 therefore how ye hear : for whosoever hath, to him shall be  
 given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even  
 that which he seemeth to have.

19 Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could  
 20 not come at him for the press. And it was told him *by*  
*certain*, which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand

*with a vessel, or putteth it under a couch ; but putteth it on a stand, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest ; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light.* This short parable is a renewed exhortation to fruitfulness, and a statement that the mystery of the kingdom was hid only that it might shine more brightly when manifested at last. Whatever truths Jesus was then sowing in the hearts of His followers were to reappear in fruit. "Do not suppose that what I now commit to you in secret, I would have concealed for ever ; the light is kindled in you by me, that by your ministry it may disperse the darkness of the whole world" (Erasmus). When the Spirit came and brought all those things to the remembrance of the apostles, He filled in all the outlines of truth which they before possessed, and they saw, so as to teach the meaning of the parable.

18. For whosoever hath. "If we do not *use*, we *lose*" (Matt. Henry).

## 2. Opposition of His Relatives, 19-21.

19. His brethren, Matt. xiii. 55 ; Mark vi. 3. Perhaps literal brethren, some think sons of Joseph by a former wife ; others sons of Cleophas and Mary, the sister and namesake of Mary the mother of Jesus.

The third theory was introduced by Jerome, avowedly in defence of the extreme value set on the virgin life by himself and several of his contemporaries. It has no ground in tradition, and therefore rests exclusively on what evidence can be adduced for it from Scripture. It proceeds on the idea that James, our Lord's brother, was one of the apostles (Gal. i. 19) ; if so, he must have been James the son of Alphæus. The mother of James and Joses — Mary — was present at the crucifixion, and she must have been the wife of Alphæus, who was father of James ; John (xix. 25) tells us that "Mary of Cleophas or Clopas," perhaps the Virgin's sister, was at the crucifixion ; she was the mother of James ; James was therefore the *cousin* of our Lord. This statement is further supported by asserting that in Scripture brother frequently denotes merely relationship, as when Abraham calls Lot his *brother* (Gen. xiii. 8) ; by the plausible identification of Alphæus and Clopas ; by stating the improbability that there could be two sets of brothers called James, Joses, and Simon, the one disciples, the other the brethren of our Lord. On the other hand, it is alleged, and with great truth, that this argument from Scripture is very weak. It is not at all improbable that there were two sets of brothers bearing these names, the commonest among the Jews, more especially if they were cousins. It is almost impossible to believe that the

21 without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go

brethren of our Lord were among the twelve apostles, as this theory supposes, because we find (1) that our Lord's brethren were not among His followers *after* the calling of the Twelve (comp. Mark iii. 13-19 with 31-35); (2) John tells us that on to near the close of His ministry His brethren did not believe in Him (John vii. 3); (3) His brethren were most likely constrained to believe in Him by our Lord's special appearance to James after His resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 7); (4) after they did become believers, and were of consequence in the infant Church, they are distinguished from the disciples (Acts i. 14). Our Lord's brethren are always mentioned in connection with Joseph and Mary, never in connection with Clopas and his wife Mary; and, lastly, it is likely that when the Scripture says brethren, it means brethren and not cousins.

As to the other theories. There is no doubt that the one connected with the name of Epiphanius, which makes our Lord's brethren to be the sons of Joseph by a former wife, was very common in the early Church, and had its origin in Palestine, where exalted views about the virtue of a virgin life did not prevail to the same extent as in the West. But it is equally clear that this view did attain its popularity because of the assumption and sentiment that the Virgin remained ever virgin. The Epiphanian view derives no direct support from Scripture, and has the defect, though in a less striking form, of not giving to the word *brethren* its ordinary meaning.

The only real argument against supposing that the brethren of our Lord were the sons of Mary, and His real brothers, is derived from the words of Jesus on the cross to John, when He gave him charge of the Virgin, His mother. It is argued that if Mary had had other sons able to care for her, she would not have gone to the house of the son of Zebedee, nor would Jesus have sent her there.

The whole subject is ably treated in Bishop Lightfoot's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 252.

21. Are these. Mark tells us that Jesus "looked round on them which sat round about Him" (iii. 34); and Matthew tells us that He stretched forth His hand "towards His disciples" (xii. 49).

#### IX. FOURTH PREACHING JOURNEY IN GALILEE, VIII. 22-39.

1. *Stilling the Storm*, 22-25; Matt. viii. 18-27; Mark iv. 35-61.

22. *On a certain day. On one of the days.* According to Matthew and to Mark, on the same day as He had begun to teach the crowd in parables. If so, how busy Jesus must have been! He had healed a demoniac (Matt. xii. 22); preached several sermons; encountered the opposition of his foes (Matt. xii. 24); and, to crown all, had to check the interference of His relatives (Mark iii. 20, 21), the last touch required to make Him thoroughly wearied.

over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched  
 23 forth. But as they sailed, he fell asleep : and there came  
 down a storm of wind on the lake ; and they were filled *with*  
 24 *water*, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and  
 awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish ! Then he  
 arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water :  
 25 and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto  
 them, Where is your faith ? And they, being afraid, wondered,  
 saying one to another, What manner of man is this ! for he  
 commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.  
 26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which

**The other side.** "In our Lord's time the contrast of this thinly-inhabited region with the busy and populous towns that lay close together on the plain of Gennesareth, must have been very striking" (Farrar). He not unfrequently sought rest by putting those six miles of water between Him and the crowds He taught.

**23. He fell asleep.** Mark adds the graphic touches that Jesus went off in the boat as *He was*, and that He fell asleep at once on the steersman's pillow.

**A storm of wind.** *A hurricane of wind.* Mark (iv. 37) uses the same word. Matthew (viii. 24) has a word which usually means *earthquake*, to denote the effect on the sea. The Sea of Galilee lies very low, is surrounded by high ranges of hills divided by long, deep glens, "like gigantic funnels to draw the cold winds down from the mountains." It is still liable to sudden storms. See Thomson's *Land and the Book*, p. 374 ; MacGregor's *The Rob Roy on the Jordan*, pp. 335-339.

**24. We perish.** The waves were filling the boat, and it was getting full ; they seemed higher than the boat, and hid it (Matt. viii. 24) ; the disciples thought that they were perishing.

**Rebuked the wind.** Jesus spoke to the waves, and also to the wind, and Mark records the two words used—*Peace*, or *Hush*, to silence the roar of the wind, and *Be still*, to the angry, threatening waves. Matthew tells us that Jesus first calmed the disciples, and then stilled the tempest.

**25. Where is your faith ?** They had faith to go to Christ, but (1) they had not *enough* of it ; "little faith," and so were *fearful* ; they had not the faith which leaves all to Christ. (2) They had not their faith ready for use ; when it was wanted suddenly, it was not there.

**Obey Him.** The miracles of Jesus show that the God who lives and moves and acts in all nature is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, "whatsoever evil He sendeth on me in this miserable life, He will turn the same to my salvation : seeing He is both able to do it, as being God Almighty, and willing to do it as being my bountiful Father" (*Palatine Catechism*). "As certainly as He could not sink with His disciples on that day, He will not suffer His disciples to sink on this" (Schleiermacher). Comp. with whole passage Ps. cvii. 23-30 ; Jonah i. ; Acts xxvii.

## 2. The Gerasene Demoniac, 26-39.

**26. Gadarenes, R. V. Gerasenes,** belonging to Gergesa, now Khersa. A little south of the town there is a spot answering to the narrative—hillsides



27 is over against Galilee. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* house, 28 but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech 29 thee, torment me not. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him : and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters ; and

with caves for tombs, pasture which wild hogs still frequent, and a steep slope with very deep water quite close to the shore. Christ is now among the wild hills to the east of the Sea of Galilee, in the district called Gaulonitis, formerly Bashan.

27. **A certain man.** The boat was touching the land, when a demoniac, naked (Luke), and so fierce that he had made the roads impassable (Matthew), came leaping towards them, his body covered with scarcely healed wounds (Mark), self-inflicted with stones. "Amid all the boasted civilisation of antiquity, there existed no hospitals, no penitentiaries, no asylums ; and unfortunates of this class, being too dangerous and desperate for human intercourse, would only be driven forth from among their fellow-men, and restrained from mischief by measures at once inadequate and cruel" (Farrar).

**In the tombs.** The restlessness of frenzy ; now sitting in the ghastly solitude of an empty tomb, then rushing wildly to the hill-tops. "On descending from the heights of Lebanon, I found myself in a cemetery . . . The silence of the night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which I discovered proceeded from a naked maniac, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone" (Warburton, *The Crescent and the Cross*, ii. 352).

28. **Torment me not.** It is torment to him not to be allowed to torment others. "The worst of all creatures hates punishment, and can say, Lead me not into pain ; only the good heart can say, Lead me not into temptation. If we can as heartily pray against sin for the avoiding of displeasure, as against punishment when we have displeased, there is true grace in the soul" (Hall).

**God Most High.** A name of God frequent in the Old Testament, and sometimes, as Gen. xiv. 18, where Melchizedek is called *the priest of the Most High God*, and Num. xxiv. 16 in Balaam's prophecy, used where there was a point of contact between Jews and Gentiles. Sometimes used in formulas of exorcism, and therefore the name of God oftenest heard by demoniacs, and the one they often used (Luke viii. 28 ; Acts xvi. 17).

29. **Chains.** The word for any band confining hands or feet, not necessarily metal ; in Ps. cxlix. 8, chains are distinguished from fetters of iron. "Satan, as a master, is bad ; his work, much worse ; his wages, worst of all. If Satan doth fetter us, it is indifferent to him whether it be by a cable or a hair ; nay, the smallest sins are his greatest stratagems" (Fuller). Satan is most tyrannous where he is obeyed most. This man was doubly bound when he was in fetters. The invisible bonds of the Evil One were about him, and held him faster than the chains of his neighbours. When he broke loose, it was to run away from his friends and not from his jailor ; he was never less free than when he had burst his fetters—the picture of a sinner.

**Kept bound.** Luke tells us that his neighbours were constantly on their



he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed *them* saw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus,

guard against him: "And he was *kept bound* with chains and in fetters;" or, as it ought to be translated, "And he was bound in chains and fetters, being under guard." Mark, as usual, gives the most graphic description of this homicidal maniac.

30. Legion. Probably to terrify Jesus, for the Roman legion was the fearful instrument of oppression and the sign of terror among the conquered nations. It consisted of 6000 men. The answers show how completely disordered the man's mind was. When Jesus asked his name, probably to soothe him, he confounded himself with the overwhelming force which held him in bondage, and sought to frighten Jesus by threatening Him with the same thralldom.

32. Herd of many swine. It was not lawful, according to Jewish law, to eat swine flesh or to possess such a herd (Lev. xi. 8). For the question of demoniac possession and the special case described here, see Trench, *Notes on Miracles*, pp. 161-191; Alford, *New Testament for English Readers*, i. 56-58. "I will only suggest that perhaps we make to ourselves a difficulty here, too easily assuming that the lower animal world is wholly shut up in itself, and incapable of receiving impressions from that which is above it. The assumption is one unwarranted by deeper investigations, which lead rather to an opposite conclusion,—not to a breaking down of the boundaries between the two worlds, but to the showing in what wonderful ways the lower is receptive of impressions from the higher, both for good and for evil. Nor does this working of the spiritual on the physical life stand isolated in this single passage of Scripture, but we are taught the same lesson throughout" (Rom. viii. 22) (Trench). There is no doubt whatever that this miracle suggests very many difficulties which are much more easily raised than answered, which enter upon the most obscure fields of human and animal psychology, and which include the whole range of mysterious sympathies existing between man and the dumb creation. As for the destruction of property, surely to free the neighbourhood from a dangerous maniac was cheaply purchased by the destruction of a herd of infuriated swine.

35. To see what was done. They all saw a maniac recovered whom they had known, whom they had been obliged to defend themselves against, who had been the terror of the country-side, his reason restored, peaceable without

36 clothed, and in his right mind ; and they were afraid. They also which saw *it* told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them : for they were taken with great fear. And he went up into the ship,  
38 and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him :  
39 but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how  
40 great things Jesus had done unto him. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him : for they were all waiting for him.

a fether, decently clad, listening to the Great Teacher. Had they known it, they saw the presence of a power greater than that of the Evil One exerted to produce conversion of a most striking kind, change from the old evil state to a new life, and to drive out that impurity of life from which unsoundness of mind and body so frequently comes.

37. To depart. "They felt more selfish vexation at the loss of the swine than grateful pleasure at the cure of the man." The selfishness of unbelief. Their prayer was heard : He did depart ; He took them at their word. When once our unthankfulness grows weary of Christ, who can pity us when we are deprived of His presence ?

38. That he might be with Him. His heart was swelling with gratitude ; he was ashamed at the conduct of his countrymen ; he could not feel safe far from his Saviour (Matt. xii. 44, 45). Every soul truly delivered from Satan's bondage desires to keep near Christ ; but sometimes nearness to Him means working for Him as well as sitting at His feet.

39. Show how great things. "The greatest demoniac became a preacher to ten cities. In the dark land of Gerasa, Christ leaves for a while a representative of Himself, since they cannot bear His personal presence" (Lange). It is worth noticing how successful the demoniac's ministry was ; for when our Lord returned again to that country, the people came in crowds to hear Him (vii. 31-viii. 9). The time was to come, through the preaching of the demoniac restored, when

"E'en the witless Gadarene,  
Preferring Christ to swine, shall learn  
That life is sweetest when 'tis clean."

"Though we are not tortured by the devil, yet he holds us as his slaves till the Son of God delivers us from his tyranny. Naked, torn, and disfigured, we wander about till He restores us to soundness of mind. It remains that, in magnifying His grace, we testify our gratitude" (Calvin).

#### X. FIFTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, VIII. 40-IX. 9.

1 and 2. *The Daughter of Jairus, and the Sick Woman*, viii. 40-56 ;  
Matt. ix. 18-26 ; Mark v. 22-43.

40. Waiting for him. The words used by Mark imply that the people

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue ; and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and  
 42 besought him that he would come into his house : for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be  
 44 healed of any, came behind *him*, and touched the border of his garment : and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

came pressing close upon Jesus, crowding and thronging upon Him as soon as He left the boat. The people of Capernaum could see the boat when it left Gergesa, they waited for it anxiously, and pressed eagerly on Jesus when He landed, some because Jesus had healed them and they were grateful, others, like Jairus, because they anxiously looked for Him to help them. There was to be no rest for Him, the crowds meant more work, and Jesus was ready at once to go about His Father's business.

41. *Jairus*. Same name as *Jair* (Judg. x. 3). He had been to Christ before, when with his colleagues he had pled for the Roman centurion who had built the synagogue. Now on his own account he falls on his knees in Oriental fashion and bends his forehead towards Christ's feet till it touches the ground.

*Ruler of the synagogue*. Each synagogue (congregation) had a college of elders, or kirk-session, who conducted or superintended the worship and exercised discipline.

42. *Daughter*. Twelve years old, and an *only* daughter ; she lay a-dying, all but dead (Matt. ix. 18) ; in despairing faith the father had left her bedside. The young man at Nain was an *only* son ; Lazarus was an *only* brother.

43. *A woman*. "Such overflowing grace is in Him the Prince of life, that as He was hastening to accomplish one work of grace and power, He accomplishes another, as by the way. His *obiter*, in Fuller's words, is to more purpose than our *iter*" (Trench, p. 188).

*An issue of blood*. The disease unfitted her for all the relationships of life, it made her ceremonially unclean, her touch made the person touched unclean (Lev. xv. 25-27), and the people believed that it was a direct consequence of sinful deeds. So she came secretly. She had lived for twelve years in solitude, for she could go to no social gathering, to no synagogue service, and she was oppressed by the knowledge that her neighbours thought her a sinful woman justly punished, once rich in friends and in money. She is now poor, ill, and companionless.

*Twelve years*. Her misery was as old as Jairus' daughter.

44. *Behind*. She approached from behind and touched the tassel of His outer robe which hung over His shoulder, thinking to steal a miracle for herself. The tassel had a certain sacred significance. She seems to have thought that Christ's miracles were a natural and not a gracious outgoing of power.

*Border of His garment*. *Hem of His garment* (Matt. ix. 20) ; "*border*" (Luke viii. 44). The hem or border was the fringe or tassel, or "ribbon of blue," which the law of Moses (Num. xv. 37-40 ; Deut. xxii. 12) commanded

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press *thee*, and sayest thou, Who touched  
46 me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I  
47 perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and, falling

every Jew to wear at each corner of his *tallith* or cloak. Those who wished to be thought very religious enlarged the *borders* of their garments (Matt. xxiii. 5). Mark tells us that she kept her courage up by saying repeatedly to herself, "If I but touch His garment, I shall be made whole." "Christ's patients are often trembling when they have cause to be triumphant" (Matt. Henry). Christ is the Saviour for secret suffering and silent sighs.

45. Who touched? At the touch she is cured, the Great Physician has healed where others failed; she steps back thankful, hoping only to get away unobserved; but she is arrested as instantly as she is healed. There may have been superstition mingling with the woman's faith, and Christ meant to bring her to a wail for her good. Imperfect and yet true faith often underlies a superstitious use of means, but Christ likes to guide to a higher faith. "If He allowed her to go away undetected, the healing filched, as it were unconsciously, from the Healer, this fancy might be confirmed, the superstitious element in her faith enhanced. Therefore it was that He would not suffer the secrecy" (Hanna). Our Lord not only heals but educates. He let her, and every one else there, and all since who read the story, know what was the kind of touch that had wrought the cure, what was the connection between her and Him that had brought her relief. It was not that he did not sympathize with the modesty of the shrinking, delicate woman, nor that He did not know the pain it would be to her to be the gazing-stock of the crowd, but this would become a sweet sorrow from the new joy and knowledge that came to her with the words, "Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

45. Throng Thee. "Many throng Him, but only one touches." "The flesh presses, faith touches." Her touch was different from all other touching. She got her blessing because between her disease and Christ's power there was her touch of faith, the bridge between the two. Her hand touched His garment. Her faith touched His divine and saving power. "Many throng Jesus: His in name, near to Him; in actual contact with the sacraments and ordinances of His Church; yet not touching Him, because not drawing nigh in faith" (Trench). "Amidst the pressure of thousands the Lord perceives the silent and gentle touch of a single believer" (Lange). One touch of real faith is better than a thousand professions. Mark tells us that Jesus looked round about. He turned round, for the tassel she touched hung down over His shoulder, and His eye wandered over the faces of the crowd till it fell on hers; trembling she fell before Him and told Him all: the long illness, the helplessness of physicians, the loss of fortune, her faith and resolve: "We must not be ashamed to own secret transactions between Christ and our souls" (Matt. Henry).

47. Trembling. For she, an unclean woman, had touched a holy Rabbi, and had made Him ceremonially unclean until evening, an almost unpardonable crime.



down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed  
48 immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort : thy faith made thee whole ; go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead ;  
50 trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard *it*, he answered

**Declared unto Him.** It was easier to tell after she had got the blessing, and our Lord asked her to confess *when* confession was easiest. He could not altogether spare her the pain of confession, for that was necessary to lead her into the way ; but He spared her as much as He could. The shame which made her wish to remain in concealment was natural enough, but in this crisis of her spiritual life it had to be overcome, and the Lord helped her to overcome it, and to make the overcoming easy for her. She would have missed the blessing of personal communion with Jesus the Healer, had she not been enabled to overcome it.

**48. Daughter.** The only time Christ so addresses a woman. He speaks to her as He spoke to the paralytic (Mark ii. 5). Both had seized their deliverance by force : the man entered through the roof in robber fashion, the woman came stealthily, forcing down her feminine fears and natural modesty. Tradition says that this woman was Veronica, and that it was she who gave our Lord the handkerchief to wipe His face on the way to Calvary, which afterwards was seen to be impressed with a portrait of Jesus.

**Thy faith.** Faith, the right hand of the soul which lays hold on the Saviour and His righteousness, drew her out of her impurity, and brought her into a new life ; not the outward act of touching the tassel.

**Go in peace.** *Enter into peace.* A timid, trembling touch of Him not only brought forth the healing power that was in Him, but gained this entrance into peace in which she was henceforth to live. "After a long-continued sorrow, a lasting blessing" (Bengel). "There is not one of all our Saviour's many miracles of healing fuller of comfort and encouragement. For if His mode of dealing with our spiritual diseases be shadowed out in the modes of the bodily cures that He effected, whenever we grow sad or despondent as we think how much of fear, or shame, or error, or weakness, or superstition mingles with the faith we cherish, then let us remember that . . . He who accepted this woman's faith with all its weakening and defiling ingredients will not cast us off" (Hanna).

**49. Trouble not.** *Do not worry the Rabbi.* The whole phrase suggests ceremonious politeness. The word translated "to trouble" means (1) *to flay*, (2) *to fatigue by length of journey*, (3) *to harass or worry*. Why add an irksome task to the laborious work of the Great Teacher? "There were more manners than faith in the phrase. Infidelity is all for ease, and thinks every good work tedious" (Hall). But there is a love that is stronger than death, and Jairus was to know its power.

**50. Heard it.** Jairus must have felt impatient at the delay. His little daughter lay a-dying, and this woman, not nearly so ill, first comes and touches Christ, and then puts off time by telling Him her case, and now all is over. Jesus ~~hastened to~~ comfort him. He is not to lose by another's gain. "We



him, saying, Fear not : believe only, and she shall be made  
 51 whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no  
 man to go in, save Peter and James and John, and the father  
 52 and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed  
 her : but he said, Weep not ; she is not dead, but sleepeth.  
 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.  
 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and  
 55 called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and  
 she arose straightway : and he commanded to give her meat.  
 56 And her parents were astonished : but he charged them that  
 they should tell no man what was done.

have as much occasion for the grace of God when death is in the house as when sickness is" (Matt. Henry).

**Fear not : believe only.** Fear and faith are coupled together here by Christ, and the faith is to cast out the fear. Jairus had asked Jesus to save his daughter's life while she still lived ; he is promised the life after it has been overcome by death. For Christ answers us not according to our petitions, but according to our needs. His mercy is always greater than we can ask or conceive.

**51. Peter, and James, and John.** This is the first time we read of the selection of these three. They were to enjoy still closer intimacy, for they were to be Christ's chosen companions at the transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1), and at the agony in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 37). The longer they abode with Christ, and the nearer they came to Him, the more their souls opened to the inflow of His Spirit.

**Came into the house.** A word spoken where He was might have cured the maiden ; but Jesus Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matt. viii. 17). He laid His hand on the sick, and went Himself to the house of mourning. His miracles were manifestations of love as well as of power, of sympathy as well as of wisdom. They are ways of showing us that when we do in faith touch the hand of omnipotence, it is a hand of love that we feel outstretched to meet ours.

**52. Bewailed her.** The Jews, like other Eastern nations, hired professional mourners whose duty it was to indulge in signs of grief ; to "beat on their breasts," to utter loud groans, and to shed forced tears (Luke viii. 52-54 ; Amos v. 16). "There are in every city and community women exceedingly skilful in this business. They are always sent for and kept in readiness. When a fresh group of sympathizers comes in, these women 'make haste' to take up a wailing, that the newly-come may the more easily unite their tears with the mourners" (Thomson, *Land and Book*, p. 103).

**Sleepeth.** So of Lazarus : *Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep : but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep.* Sleep, the twin-brother of death. Death and sleep are alike to Jesus ; and death is to Him what sleep is to others ; for He can wake the dead. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," etc. (1 Thess. iv. 14-18).

**54. Put them all out.** Only the real mourners were to be comforted, only those who trusted were to see the miracle of faith. The eyes of those

CHAP. IX. 1 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure  
 2 diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of  
 3 God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take  
 4 nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither  
 5 bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And  
 6 whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence  
 depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go  
 out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for  
 a testimony against them. And they departed, and went  
 through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every  
 where.

who utterly derided Him were not worthy of the honour. Faithlessness keeps us from seeing many a manifestation of the glory of God, and renders us incapable of secret fellowship with the Saviour.

3. *The Mission of the Twelve Apostles*, ix. 1-6; Matt. x. 5-42;  
 Mark vi. 6-13.

1. **His twelve disciples.** Matthew connects this deed with Christ's thought that the multitudes were like sheep without shepherds. The Twelve are to be trained to be shepherds. Perhaps also there is the thought that Herod, who has slain John, may stop the preaching of Jesus, and other preachers are needed.

2. **Sent them.** See Matt. x. 5-42 for the full charge. This charge is quite different from that addressed to the seventy who were appointed to go to towns and villages which their Master was about to visit, and herald His approach. It is a scheme of mission work partly intended for the present, and partly prophetic of the future. The mission-field was to be the lost sheep of *the house of Israel*; the theme of their preaching, the nearness of the kingdom; their credentials, the power of working miracles, even to the raising of the dead; their equipment, the ordinary dress of a Galilean peasant on a journey; and a description is given of their manner of approach to, and behaviour in, houses and towns. The future of the Church is foreshadowed in the mission, character, and work of the apostles, who, in wise harmlessness, are to go forth into the cruel world: persecution awaits them, but they have the consolation that the Father's power and wisdom accompany them, and in the end will bring them the reward of the faithful; cross-bearing awaits them, and separation from all that earth counts dear, but their losses on earth are gains in heaven; and their reward is that their work shall not be fruitless.

3. **Scrip.** A bag slung over the shoulder, a wallet, made in Syria of a kid's skin stripped off whole, and tanned (1 Sam. xvii. 40).

4. **There abide.** As Lydia entreated Paul to do: "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house *and abide there*" (Acts xvi. 15).

5. **Shake off the dust,** as Paul did at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 51), and at Corinth (Acts xviii. 6). It was a common Jewish mode of expressing

- 7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him :  
 and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that  
 8 John was risen from the dead ; and of some, that Elias had  
 appeared ; and of others, that one of the old prophets was  
 9 risen again. And Herod said, John have I beheaded : but  
 who is this of whom I hear such things ? And he desired  
 to see him.  
 10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that

renunciation or excommunication, or "no better than heathen." Mark uses the simple word *earth* or *soil*, Matthew and Luke say *dust*.

#### 4. *Herod's Inquiries, 7-9.*

7. King Herod was Herod Antipas, who was tetrarch, *i.e.* ruler over a *fourth* part of his father's kingdom. Herod the Great (Matt. ii. 1) had ten wives and fifteen children. Four children are mentioned in the Bible: Archelaus (Matt. ii. 22), and *Herod Antipas* (Matt. xiv. 1 ; Mark vi. 14 ; Luke iii. 1, ix. 7, xiii. 31, xxiii. 7), sons of Malthakè, a Samaritan ; Philip (Matt. xiv. 3 ; Mark vi. 17 ; Luke iii. 19), son of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest ; and Herod Philip, son of Cleopatra (Luke iii. 1). Aristobulus, another son not mentioned in Scripture, was the father of the Herod mentioned in Acts xii., and of *Herodias*. Herodias married (1) her uncle Philip, the son of Mariamne, and (2) Herod Antipas. The marriage was unlawful in three ways : (1) Herod's wife was still living ; (2) Herodias' husband was still living ; (3) it was a marriage between uncle and niece. Herod Antipas was banished to Gaul in 39 A.D., Herodias followed him, and both died in exile. See table of Herod family, pp. 38, 39.

8. *Elias*. The verses tell the rumours that came to the palace. Some declared that Jesus was Elijah, who was not merely a prophet, but, according to current opinion, the great forerunner ; others did not think so highly of Jesus, and said that He was one of the old prophets risen from the dead, Jeremiah perhaps (Matt. xvi. 14) ; while others merely declared that this new teacher was a man *like* the old prophets.

#### XI. SIXTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, IX. 10 ; MARK VI. 30.

##### *The Return of the Apostles, 10.*

10. *Apostles*. They came to tell Jesus what they had done. Another company of disciples came also (Matt. xiv. 12). The disciples of John came to tell Him of their master's death. "It reminded Him of *another murder* that should be committed. Yet it is because of that death that a place in glory was ready for John, and is ready for every other 'faithful witness' like him (Col. i. 12-14)" (Stock). Jesus knew what the "leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod" (Matt. xvii. 12) would bring forth in the end ; but His time was not yet come. Here begin, therefore, His journeys of flight. He left Capernaum, within Herod's dominions, and crossed the lake into those of Philip.

they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.  
 11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him : and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

#### IV. YEAR OF OPPOSITION, IX. 10-XIX. 28.

##### A.—SECLUSION IN GALILEE—JOURNEYS OF FLIGHT.

*From the Passover to Feast of Dedication.*

##### I. FIRST JOURNEY OF FLIGHT, IX. 10-17.

*Retirement to a Desert Place—Feeding of the Five Thousand, 10-17 ;*

Matt. xiv. 13-21 ; Mark vi. 30-44 ; John vi. 1-14.

10. Went aside privately. Was this a journey of flight, or only one in search of rest after labours? It is somewhat difficult to say: *probably* a journey of flight, when we remember how, before the Pharisees had taken counsel with the Herodians to slay Jesus, He had known of the plot ; and now He knew that Herod, the patron of those Herodians, who had slain John, was inquiring after Him.

Desert place. This place of retirement has presented some difficulties. Mark tells us simply that it was a desert place, to which our Lord and His disciples went by boat. Luke tells us that it was a desert place belonging to the city of Bethsaida (there are great variations in the MSS., but the best reading undoubtedly has the words *city of Bethsaida*). On the other hand, Mark says that *after* the miracle the disciples were sent across the sea to Bethsaida ; and it is said that John (vi. 23) declares that the place where the miracle was wrought was near Tiberias. There must, therefore, have been two places called Bethsaida, or the text of the Gospels has been corrupted. Critics who assert that there was only one Bethsaida, point out that in the Sinaitic MS. the words in Luke ix. 10, *belonging to the city of Bethsaida*, are omitted, and that the verse in John reads, "When, therefore, the boats came from Tiberias, which was nigh unto the place where they did eat bread." The one Bethsaida is therefore Bethsaida Julias, to which the disciples crossed from near Tiberias, where the miracle took place. There are, however, very grave difficulties connected with this view. The readings of the Sinaitic MS. have not been received either in Luke ix. 10 or in John vi. 23. There was a Bethsaida of Galilee (John xii. 21), which could not have been Bethsaida Julias ; and Luke ix. 10 speaks of a Bethsaida on one side of the lake, while Mark vi. 45 refers to a Bethsaida on the other. We may therefore conclude that there were two Bethsaidas : one in Galilee, the other in Gaulonitis. The latter is meant here. This Bethsaida (fish-town) was enlarged and adorned by Herod Philip shortly after the birth of Christ, and called by him Julias in honour of the emperor's daughter.

11. Followed. It was Passover time, and the roads were full of people (John vi. 4). They went round the north side of the lake, crossing the Jordan. "He who is in earnest to go to Christ will let no trouble hinder him."

Received them. Jesus had probably landed and had gone up one of the hill-sides (John vi. 3) to a quiet place. The people gathered ; He came



12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and  
 13 get victuals : for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes ; except we should go  
 14 and buy meat for all this people. (For they were about five thousand men.) And he said to his disciples, Make them sit  
 15 down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made forth to them, taught them, and healed the sick (Luke ix. 11). The Lord sacrificed for men His retirement.

12. When the day began to wear away. *When it was evening*, Matthew says (xiv. 15). There were two evenings in the Jewish day, and a space of time, probably between three o'clock and five o'clock, was called "between the evenings." From Matthew it can be gathered that the disciples asked Jesus to send the multitudes away about three o'clock, and that He ascended to the hill-top when all was over between five o'clock and six o'clock ; see ver. 47.

**The Twelve.** Comparing the various passages, the course of events seems to have been :—(1) Jesus taught and healed ; then (2) He asked Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?* Philip had not the faith to accept the partnership in a miracle which the word "we" invited him to, and answered (3) that two hundred pence would not buy bread enough (John vi. 5-7) ; (4) our Lord went on teaching and healing ; (5) at even the apostles asked Him to send the multitudes away ; (6) He asked them to feed them ; (7) they answered as Philip had done ; (8) He told them to go and see what bread could be had ; a boy offers what he had ; and (9) Andrew brought it to Jesus.

**Send the multitude away.** There was more charity than faith in the request. The disciples had their compassion also for the people ; the crowd was on the desert side of the sea, in a rugged, desolate country, and the short Eastern twilight would soon be upon them. The famished multitude might come to harm. Their charity and compassion were rightly called into exercise. It was their faith that was at fault.

13. Give ye them to eat. God sometimes asks us to do for Him more than we can, as when He commands us to keep His whole law, but always in order to show us how easy it is to rest on Himself. "As when the mother bids the infant come to her, which hath not yet the steady use of his legs, it is that he may cling the faster to her hand and clothes for support."

**Five, and two fishes.** The loaves were barley-cakes (John vi. 9), and it was Andrew who had found the lad, a little boy (*paidarion*) who carried them in his basket-wallet. These barley-cakes were the food of the poor, and a barley-cake was a most insignificant thing (Judg. vii. 13). The fishes were small dried fish usually eaten as something tasty with the barley-bread. The five small cakes and the two fishes were the remains of the boy's day's provisions.

14. By fifties. Each group consisted of two rows of 100, a shorter one of 50 persons. The fourth side remained open, as was the custom at the feasts of the ancients. There were twenty groups of 250. The women and children (Matt. xiv. 21), according to Oriental fashion, ate by themselves.



- 16 them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.  
 17 And they did eat, and were all filled : and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.  
 18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him : and he asked them, saying, Whom say the

16. **Blessed.** It was Passover time, and these multitudes got their paschal feast in the wilderness with Christ. Our Lord blessed, brake, and distributed in the way that the father of the household did at the Passover feast. He who makes the corn-seed bring forth sixty-fold, by the same creative power multiplied the bread. The multiplication of grain and of loaves are acts of the same omnipotence. Our Saviour supplied at once that creative force of nature which the farmer has to wait for, and which comes to his aid every year in the miracle of harvest.

17. **And were all filled.** For Christ's love is as great as His power. None were forgotten, and all had enough. Jesus gave to the disciples, and they, keeping nothing to themselves, as freely handed to the people. Even Judas forgot to hoard.

**Baskets.** The word denotes the small wicker-basket in which each Jew carried his day's food to avoid pollution. The Jew was called "basket-carrier" by the Romans. At the feeding of the four thousand the basket was the large rope-basket. The presence of Christ will change a desert place into a paradise, and a place where there is no bread into a fruitful garden. This miracle is the only one related by each of the four evangelists. It is used by John as the text of Jesus' sermon on the Bread of Life (John vi. 22-65). John also records the effect on the people : they wished then and there to crown Jesus their Messiah King, and His refusal was a distinct crisis in His earthly ministry.

*Luke omits the seventh sojourn in Capernaum (Matt. xv. 1-20). The second flight to Tyre and Sidon (Matt. xv. 21-28), and round by the Decapolis (Matt. xv. 29-39). The return to Capernaum and the beginnings of the third flight to the territories of Herod Philip (Mark viii. 1-26).*

## II. THIRD JOURNEY OF FLIGHT, XI. 18-45.

1. *Peter's Confession*, ix. 18-21 ; Matt. xvi. 13-20 ; Mark viii. 27-30.

18. **Asked his disciples.** Jesus had been finally rejected by the Pharisees and by the Galileans. The people *had* fancied He was the Messiah, but they did so no longer. Those who yet revered Him spoke of Him as (1) *John the Baptist* risen from the dead, bringing supernatural powers with him from the unseen world ; (2) as *Elias* or *Elijah*, the great ideal of a spiritual reformer, whose return to earth as the Forerunner was expected (Mal. iv. 5) ; or (3) as a prophet. Nobody spoke of Him as the Messiah. "As Satan could not rob the Jews of the conviction that Christ would come, he changed Him into various shapes, and, as it were, cut Him in pieces. His next scheme was to bring forward many pretended Christs. By similar contrivances he continued ever afterwards either to tear Christ in pieces or to exhibit Him under a false character" (Calvin). Matthew tells us that Christ's

19 people that I am? They answering, said, John the Baptist;  
 but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old pro-  
 20 phets is risen again. He said unto them, But whom say ye  
 21 that I am? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God. And

question was, "Whom do men say that I, *the Son of man*, am?" He was acknowledged to be the Son of man, but in what sense did they acknowledge His right to this title? Did they give it the meaning that Daniel did when he prophesied, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him"? (Dan. vii. 13). Did they mean by the phrase that He was the Messiah, the King who was to have an *everlasting dominion* (Dan. vii. 14), or did they use it in any lower sense?

20. But whom say ye that I am? The question was put in circumstances to try their faith. Jesus had been rejected of the rulers and scribes, a combination of Pharisees and Herodians had been formed against Him, He had been forced to flee a third time from the scenes of His Galilean ministry, and was now wandering in the most distant part of Palestine a fugitive. He was in a half-heathen land; the rocks that overhung the highway were marked here and there with the emblems of a gross, degrading paganism. He felt that the time and place were tests of faith. Were these disciples also to go away? and if they would confess Him, how were they to bear the news of yet further steps in the humiliation? Jesus prepared Himself for the question, and for what was to follow it, by silent prayer; and then, after the strength which came to Him while "He was alone praying" (Luke ix. 18), He put the momentous question to the disciples.

The Christ of God. What of the disciples; will they too hesitate? Peter answers promptly, "*The Christ of God.*" Matthew says that Peter's answer was, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matt. xvi. 16), an exact antithesis to Jesus' question; cf. the revelation to Simeon (Luke ii. 26), *the Lord's Christ*. Mark's version is, "*Thou art the Christ*" (viii. 29). Similar testimonies had been given earlier in the ministry of our Lord. Nathanael had confessed that the Jesus who had called him was *the Son of God, the King of Israel* (John i. 49). Peter after the rejection at Capernaum had confessed Him to be the *Holy One of God* (John vi. 69, R.V.). These confessions were all different from this one, however, given in answer to a solemn question put after solemn prayer, in circumstances like those in which the little company were then. This was the central point in Jesus' training of the Twelve. He had now won the deliberate trust and conviction of those whom He had chosen to live in close fellowship with Himself through His ministry, who were to be witnesses for Him after His departure, and who, continuing His ministry, were to lay the foundations of the Church that was to preach the Gospel to every creature. This utterance of Peter may therefore be regarded as the first adoring confession of the New Testament Church; the Church, in the germ, as it were, in Peter, for the first time bears worshipping witness to her Lord. The question which Jesus put by the wayside near Cæsarea Philippi to the Twelve, He has continued to put all down the stream of time to every individual soul to whom He reveals Himself,—*Whom say ye that I the Son of man am?*—and the stream of adoring confession in answer has been the spring of the life of His Church, and will be to the end of time.

he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing; saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

**21. And He straitly charged them.**—Mark and Luke omit the blessing of Peter (Matt. xvi. 16–18), which, however it may be interpreted, confers no primacy on the ardent apostle; for all that was said to Peter was said twice afterwards by Jesus to all the Twelve and to all the Church. Both Evangelists, with Matthew, record our Lord's charge to keep the revelation contained in the confession secret. Why? Lest Galilean enthusiasm would make Him king? The time was past for that. Rather because His work had yet to be finished, there was a cross to suffer before the crown could be worn; because the disciples' faith was weak, and their knowledge small; because the Holy Ghost had first to come to teach them the whole truth about Jesus ere they could rightly proclaim the Messiah.

2. *First clear Prediction of the Passion*, 22–27; Matt. xvi. 21–28; Mark viii. 31–ix. 1.

**22. Must suffer.** They had confessed Him the Messiah. Did they know the Messiah's work?—suffering, rejection, death, and rising again? Could they His apostles still believe when they knew all, when their crude Messianic conceptions of earthly splendour and temporal rule were shattered, and they began to see that they were followers of a suffering Saviour? It was just before and during the night of the Captivity that the old prophets began to teach Israel the mystery of suffering in their revelation of a suffering Saviour: it was during a journey of flight far away from familiar Galilee, surrounded by a half-heathen people, that our Lord gave the first clear intimation that He was to suffer many things and be slain.

**The elders and chief priests and scribes.** Jesus was to be rejected by each of the three great sections which made up the Jewish Sanhedrin—*i.e.* by *all* those who were the religious guides and authorities of the chosen people.

**And be slain.** The precise mode of death was not told all at once, but was introduced by obscure intimations, until in the last journey to Jerusalem Jesus plainly said that He was to be crucified (Matt. xx. 18, 19).

There had been many an obscure intimation before this:—(1) In John the Baptist's exclamation, *The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John i. 29); (2) in our Lord's statement to the Jews at His first Passover, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up* (John ii. 19), when He spake of the temple of His body; (3) in His talk with Nicodemus, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up* (John iii. 14); (4) in His talk with the disciples of John at the table of Matthew the publican, *But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them* (Mark ii. 20, and Matt. ix. 15); (5) in His charge to the disciples, *He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me* (Matt. x. 38); (6) in the sermon on the Bread of Life at Capernaum, *The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world* (John vi. 51).

23 And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.  
 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever  
 25 will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and  
 26 lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his*  
 27 Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

23. To *them* all. Speaking now, not to the apostles, but to the whole company of the people (Mark viii. 34); for crowds followed Him in this strange land. He tells them that as the Master's cross goes before His crown, so is it also with the disciple.

Cross. The first mention of the death He was to die: the most painful and disgraceful way of putting to death. The cross meant then what the gallows means now. *His* cross implies that the world has a cross for every Christian. Luke says, *Take up his cross daily*. To follow Christ implied continuous and entire self-sacrifice. The Romans were accustomed to compel criminals to carry the cross on which they were to be crucified to the place of execution. The Galileans to whom He spoke would understand the dread significance of the word, for they had seen hundreds of their countrymen crucified after the fierce Galilean revolts which had preceded the ministry of Jesus. "If thou bearest the cross, the cross will bear thee" (Thomas à Kempis).

24. Shall lose it. Our Lord uses these solemn words of warning on at least four separate occasions:—(1) In His charge to the disciples (Matt. x. 39); (2) in this passage with the corresponding texts in Matthew (xvi. 25) and Mark (viii. 35); (3) in His discourse on the coming of the kingdom to the Pharisees in Perea (Luke xvii. 33); (4) in His prediction of His death in the Temple after the Greeks sought to see Him (John xii. 25). The Greek word for life has a great variety of meaning, embracing every form of life, from the merest vegetable existence up to the spiritual life of an immortal soul. It has two meanings in this passage: the natural earthly existence, and the higher spiritual life.

25. Gain the whole world. The earthly-minded man buys the world, and his own soul is the price he pays for it. "How poor a price is all the craft and pleasure of this life to hire a man by sin to lose his salvation!" (Baxter). "True, life is sweet, and death is bitter; but eternal death is more bitter, and eternal life is more sweet" (Hooper).

26. Shall be ashamed of me. The temptation to be ashamed of Jesus is one of the most trying that *young Christians* have to face, and Jesus forewarns us of it. He is not afraid to tell His followers the worst, for there is better to win than the worst that has to be endured.

27. Till they see the kingdom of God. Various explanations of this phrase have been given:—(1) *The transfiguration*, seen by Peter, James, and John; (2) *Pentecost*, and the progress of the gospel afterwards, seen by the



28 And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a  
 29 mountain to pray. And, as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and*  
 30 glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men,  
 31 which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jeru-

Eleven; (3) *the destruction of Jerusalem*, which is spoken of as a type of the future advent, seen by John, and perhaps by Philip. *All* three may be right; for what Christ promised was such a vision as would produce assurance of the triumph of His Kingdom in the future.

3. *The Transfiguration*, 28-36; Matt. xvii. 1-8; Mark ix. 2-10.

28. **About an eight days after.** Mark says *after six days*. Luke reckons inclusively, according to a common custom.

**A mountain.** Mount Hermon was the great northern landmark of Palestine (Ps. lxxxix. 12). Its peak was snow-capped. An old tradition made the top of Tabor the scene of the transfiguration; but, during the time of our Lord, Tabor was crowned by a fortress; and, besides, all evidence goes to show that Jesus was in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi. Hermon is within six hours' journey of the city, and it is *the* mountain of the neighbourhood. It is 10,000 feet high, and is visible from every part of Palestine, ending the view northward. Its old name was *Sirion* (Deut. iii. 9), the *breastplate*, from its shining, pale-blue, snow-capped cone. Contrast the scene on this mountain, and that on another, when Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

29. **As He prayed, etc.** The disciples who a few days before had been told about the *cross* were now to *see* the *crown* or the *heavenly glory* of Jesus. His fashion of countenance was altered (Luke); His raiment became white as the light (Matthew), glistening (Luke), like snow, whiter than the art of man could make it (Mark). Jesus made His disciples *see* that He had power in Himself to take His glory; and that His resolve to suffer was because He had resolved of His own free will to do His work of redemption.

**Glistening.** The word is applied to—(1) the glitter of arms or of polished surfaces; (2) the flashing of lightning; (3) the twinkling of stars, and is therefore peculiarly expressive. Matthew compares the whiteness of the robes of Jesus to the *light*; Mark, to the snow; and Mark and Luke, in the word they use, to the sheen of lightning. It was Christ incarnate who was transfigured, and therefore His people have the promise of participation in His glory. He shall change our vile bodies, that they may become like His glorious Body. "We are not so sure of death as of transfiguration; all the days of our appointed time we will therefore wait till our changing shall come" (Hall).

30. **Moses and Elias.** The representatives of the Old Testament, of the law and the prophets (Matt. vii. 12); the two greatest men of the Old Testament. Their presence was an answer to the charges of the scribes that Jesus was destroying the law.

31. **They talked with Jesus** about His decease at Jerusalem. The death the disciples could not bear to think of was known in heaven. "No synod on



32 salem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, they saw his glory,  
 33 and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here : and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered

earth was ever more gloriously attended than this, no assembly was ever more illustrious. Here is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Here are Moses and Elias, the chief of the prophets. Here are Peter, James, and John, the chief of the apostles" (Brenz).

**Decease.** *Exodus* or departure (2 Pet. i. 15).

32. Were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake. *Were fully awake.* They were suddenly startled from sleep into full wakefulness.

33. As they departed from Him. *As they were parting from Him.*

It is good for us to be here. "If any earthly place or condition might have given warrant to Peter's motion, this was it. Here was a hill, the emblem of heaven ; here were two saints, the epitome of heaven ; here was Christ, the God of heaven" (Hall). Better to be there than to be rejected of the Jews and to be slain, Peter thought.

**Let us make three tabernacles.** The best reading in Matthew is, "Let *me* make three tabernacles." Peter impetuously wished to do all the work himself.

**Tabernacles,** little booths or huts, such as were constructed for the feast of Tabernacles, made out of branches of trees or bushes. Peter and his fellows were so taken with the sight of the felicity they saw, that they desired to abide on the mount with Jesus and the saints. What moved them shows what will delight us when this transient world is over, and God will gather His people to Himself. Here was but Hermon, and there will be heaven ; here were but two saints, there the mighty multitude no man can number ; here was but Christ transfigured, there He will sit at the right hand of God, enthroned in the majesty of heaven ; here was a representation for a brief interval, there a gift and permanent possession of blessedness.

**Not knowing what he said.** Peter was as a man who dreamed ; he spoke, but only half knowing what he said ; as dazed with the vision of glory, —Jesus between Moses and Elijah, as he was afterwards to be with the vision of woe,—Jesus between the two thieves on Calvary.

34. A cloud. A glorious shining cloud (the Shechinah) covered them. Moses, Elias, and Jesus faded into it ; the Father's voice was heard ; the disciples, terror-stricken like the Israelites in presence of the same Shechinah at Sinai, fell prone on their faces (Matt. xvii. 6) ; then Jesus came and touched them, and they were again alone with Him. St. Peter tells us the scene in 2 Pet. i. 16–18 ; St. John, in John i. 14 and in 1 John i. 1.

**Feared,** as Moses did when he saw the glory of God in Horeb, and exclaimed, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii. 21) ; as Isaiah did when he saw the Lord in vision sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and cried out, "Woe is me ! for I am undone" (Isa. vi. 5) ; as John did in Patmos, who, when he saw one like unto the Son of man, "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i. 17).

35 into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud,  
 36 saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were  
 38 come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child:

35. A voice came out of the cloud. One of the three heavenly voices which spoke of Christ during His public ministry:—(1) At His baptism: *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Mark i. 11); (2) at His transfiguration: *This is my beloved Son, hear Him* (ix. 36); (3) in the Temple court, before His seizure, when all was ready for the final sacrifice: *I have both glorified it (my name), and will glorify it* (John xii. 28). The first at the beginning of His ministry, the call to His work, the dedication of the Son by the Father; the second at the chief crisis of His earthly wanderings, when the work of suffering begins to overshadow preaching; the third before His final rejection and crucifixion.

My beloved Son; rather, *My chosen Son*. "In the words themselves of this majestic installation, there is a remarkable honouring of the Old Testament, and of it in all its parts, which can scarcely be regarded as accidental; for the three several clauses of that salutation are drawn severally from the Psalms (Ps. ii. 7), the prophets (Isa. xlii. 1), and the law (Deut. xviii. 15); and together they proclaim Him concerning whom they are spoken to be the king, the prophet, and the priest of the new covenant" (Trench, on the parallel passage in Matthew). This voice made a wonderful impression on Peter, who speaks of it in terms of reverent awe. It came, he says, from the most excellent glory; and by it James, John, and Peter were admitted into the secret and holy mysteries of heaven (2 Pet. i. 16-18).

36. Jesus was found alone. Matthew relates that at the voice the disciples fell prone on their faces, then Jesus came and touched them, and suddenly raising their faces and gazing round, they found themselves alone with their Master (Matt. xvii. 6-8). Jesus, who came to fulfil the law and the prophets, remained to them when Moses and Elijah had departed. "Hence it is evident that He who is to be heard is the Son, not Moses nor Elijah" (Bengel). The Son remained to be heard and listened to, and this made emphatic the voice, *Hear Him*. The command was needed now that Jesus had begun to speak openly about His death; for His interpretation and way of fulfilling law and prophecy ran counter to the crude Messianic hopes of the disciples and of the Jewish nation.

They kept it close. They told no man till after the resurrection, for they did not yet understand what they had seen; the transfiguration was but a foreshadowing of the ascension, and the one could not be understood without the other.

4. *The Demoniac Boy*, 37-43; Matt. xvii. 14-21; Luke ix. 37-43.

38. Master, I beseech thee. This was why Jesus and the three disciples could not remain on the Mount of Transfiguration; there was work for them

39 and, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out ; and  
 it teareth him that he foameth again ; and, bruising him, hardly  
 40 departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast  
 41 him out ; and they could not. And Jesus answering, said, O  
 faithless and perverse generation ! how long shall I be with  
 42 you, and suffer you ? Bring thy son hither. And as he was  
 yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And  
 Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and  
 delivered him again to his father.

in the world of pain and sin. "Hardly such another contrast can be found in the Gospels as this, between the open heaven and sons of glory on the mount, and the valley beneath with its terrible forms of misery, pain, and unbelief" (Stier). This contrast is wonderfully depicted in Raphael's great picture of the Transfiguration—on the mountain all is calm, bright, and heavenly ; in the vale below all is suffering, human passion, humiliating failure to cure. The disciples were in great distress. A lunatic boy, fearfully tormented, had been brought to them ; their Lord had given them power over evil spirits, yet they were powerless ; the scribes were scoffing ; the people excited. Just then Jesus appeared. The Lord comes at the right time always to help His disciples. He came down on the lake when the disciples were enveloped in the storm of wind : He comes down now when His disciples are overborne by the violence of demoniac possession and by the jeers of the scribes (Mark). Jesus with the three came forward to the crowd, who, parting, allowed Him to pass to their centre. He heard and saw the commotion, and put the question (Mark ix. 16) indiscriminately.

39. **A spirit taketh him.** Mark is as usual more graphic than the other Evangelists. He records the *amazement* of the crowd at the appearance of Jesus at the very time when His presence was needed by His disciples ; the prompt question of Jesus ; the fact that the father of the demoniac had meant to bring his boy to Jesus, but had only found His disciples ; and that the boy was dumb. Mark and Luke dwell on the supernatural side of the diseases, while Matthew gives the natural description. The case described has all the features of an aggravated form of epilepsy or epileptic lunacy. The boy cries out, is convulsed, foams at the mouth, clenches his teeth, and pines away.

41. **How long shall I be with you ?** etc. These words were addressed (1) to the father, (2) to the disciples, (3) to the crowd, and (4) through them to the whole people. There is a day of grace which may pass away.

42. **As he was yet a coming.** Jesus does not cure all at once. He has not only to cast out the devil, but to tell His disciples, the multitude, and all future generations how the devil can be cast out :—(1) He makes the father tell the case, *confession* ; (2) acknowledge God's power ; (3) and manifest faith. From the combined description of the Evangelists, it is evident that this boy's possession was epileptic lunacy of the deadliest and most terrible kind. No worse case was ever brought to the Saviour. Mr. Caldwell, in a remarkable paper on demoniac possession, contributed to the *Contemporary Review* of 1876, gives strange parallels in cases like this which he has seen in India, and which he is inclined to ascribe to more than merely natural disease.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.  
 But, while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus  
 44 did, he said unto his disciples, Let these sayings sink down  
 into your ears : for the Son of man shall be delivered into the  
 45 hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it  
 was hid from them, that they perceived it not : and they  
 feared to ask him of that saying.

46 Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them  
 47 should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of

5. *Second Prediction of the Passion*, 44, 45 ; Matt. xvii. 22, 23 ;  
 Mark ix. 31, 32.

44. *Shall be delivered.* Jesus, according to Mark (ix. 31), kept repeating to His disciples that there was approaching betrayal, death, burial, and rising again.

45. *They understood not the saying.* This sentence is given both by Mark and Luke. It was almost impossible to get them to abandon their cherished dreams of an earthly kingdom ; they still desired salvation without atonement. It is difficult for us to see how the disciples could misunderstand the explicit declarations of Jesus constantly repeated about His death and rising again. We should remember, however, how deeply seated their expectation of a glorious conquering Messiah was, and how very difficult it is to make men whose minds are full of one idea take in another. None are so blind as those who will not see. Besides, Jesus had been accustomed to speak in parables, and it may be that the disciples thought that those constant allusions to a mysterious death, burial, and rising again were metaphors of a glorious, visible kingdom to rise suddenly out of present debasements. The resurrection and the descent of the Spirit were needed to give them a living sense of the real meaning of the kingdom ; and the *sudden* change from earlier shrinking ignorance and incapacity to a clear knowledge of the real meaning of Jesus' mission, and to a boldness in proclaiming it, is one of the strongest proofs of the reality of those two great events.

*Feared to ask Him.* Was the repeated statement of Jesus beginning to tell upon them, were they afraid that perhaps these sayings were no parable after all, and did they wilfully refrain from asking lest the unwelcome truth should be forced upon their unwilling minds ? Men sometimes act in this fashion, and refuse to ask lest they may hear what they do not wish to know.

### III. NINTH SOJOURN IN CAPERNAUM, IX. 46-50.

1. *The Disciples taught Humility*, 46-48 ; Matt. xviii. 1-10 ; Mark ix. 33-37.

46. *Which of them should be greatest.* Who should take the chief place in the new Messianic kingdom which they expected would be set up. The unseemly dispute was renewed at the Last Supper (Luke xxii. 24-26), and indeed the ambitious thought was more than once in the minds of the disciples. The fact that these disputes did take place shows that our Lord had not given any real recognised pre-eminence to Peter in the conversation on the road to Cæsarea Philippi.



48 their heart, took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me ; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me : for he that is least among you all, the same shall be  
49 great. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name ; and we forbade him, because  
50 he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not : for he that is not against us is for us.

47. A child. "If there was any primacy among the apostles (as of Peter), why was Christ here silent about it?" (Beza). The rule of the kingdom is, *Use thyself for others*. In the kingdom of humility there is no contention ; the more humble and simple we are, the nearer are we to the Saviour. Mark's narrative is the fullest :—(1) Jesus sat down, (2) He called the Twelve to Him, (3) He took a little child and placed it in the midst of them, (4) He took it into His arms, or, as Luther says, pressed it to His heart, (5) and then He spoke to them. An old legend, probably derived from the fact that the martyr told Trajan that he carried God in his heart, and that Christians afterwards called him Christophoros, declares that child was Ignatius.

## 2. The Disciples taught Tolerance, 49, 50.

49. In Thy name. Farrar thinks that the incident was suggested to John by the words "*in my name*" (ver. 48). "We gather from this passage how mightily the words and influence of Christ had worked outside the sphere of His permanent dependants, exciting in individuals a degree of spiritual energy that performed miracles on others" (Meyer).

He followeth not with us. John does not say, "*He followeth not Thee.*" He was a disciple of Christ, but not one of those who went about with the Master. John spoke intolerantly, and was rebuked by Jesus. "Better a thousand times that the work of warring against Satan should be done by other hands than not done at all. Happy is he who knows something of the spirit of Moses when he said, '*Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets,*' and of Paul when he said, '*If Christ is preached, I rejoice, yea and will rejoice*'" (Ryle).

50. Forbid him not. No one working in good faith in Christ's name is to be forbidden, though he works by different methods than we do.

He that is not against us is for us. In Matt. xii. 30, Jesus said, *He who is not with Me is against Me*. Renan declares that the sayings are contradictory, "two irreconcilable rules of proselytism, evoked by a passionate struggle." They are, however, two tests to be applied in quite different circumstances ; by the one we are to test our own devotion to Christ, by the other we are to test the judgments we are apt to pass on neighbours. The one is for ourselves, the other for others. In the one the believer is alone in the presence of Christ, in the other he is one of the many who make up the visible fellowship of the faithful. In the one rule Jesus says *He* and *Me*, in the other He says *He* and *Us*. There is no neutrality possible in the one case ; we must be on Christ's side or against Him, it is matter of life or death with each individual believer. In the other there is a fellowship, a commonwealth ; with the fundamental principle in all commonwealths, that men must give and take.



51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to  
 52 Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make  
 53 ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his

B.—PERIOD OF WORK IN THE PEREA AND IN JUDEA.

*From Feast of Tabernacles to beginning of Passion week—a period of six months.*

Luke omits between ix. 50 and ix. 51:—

(1) *Jesus' journey to Jerusalem to the feast of Tabernacles—The secrecy of His journey—The people ask, Where is He?—Jesus appears in the Temple, and teaches—The Jews wish to arrest Him—Nicodemus' plea—The adulteress brought to Him—The attempts to stone Him—He heals a man blind from birth—The parable of the Good Shepherd* (John vii. 2-x. 21).

(2) *Jesus' return to Galilee.*

I. LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM. FEAST OF THE DEDICATION,

IX. 51.

1. *Attempt to go through Samaria, 51-62.*

51. When the time was come that He should be received up. *When the days of the assumption or ascension were well-nigh come.* Luke anticipates the ascension or the being received up into heaven (Mark xvi. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 16), and makes all that intervened between Jesus' last leaving Galilee and the triumphant end of His earthly life, so many links in one chain leading to that great and crowning consummation.

Stedfastly set His face. The final rejection, with Gethsemane, Calvary, and the Sepulchre, were all before Him waiting for Him in Jerusalem, and He braced Himself to meet them.

52. Messengers. For a large company went with Him, and preparations were needed to receive them at each resting-place. He had also now openly avowed Himself to be the Messiah, and that had to be made known by His messengers.

A village of the Samaritans. His road (see map, p. 31) lay over the shoulder of Tabor, past Nain and Endor, and the Samaritan village must have been *Ginnea* or *En Gannim*, which guards the first pass into the Samaritan hills.

53. They did not receive Him, etc. There was strong mutual antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were a mixed race, separated from the Galileans in the north, and the pure Jews in the south, not merely by situation, but by different customs and by centuries of hate. They had not been allowed to help in the building of the Temple; and, wrathful at the refusal, they had become more and more separated from their co-religionist neighbours. They rejected all the Scriptures which had been gathered during the Captivity, and kept only the Pentateuch. They were a

- 54 face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.
- 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.
- 57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever

small people; their land was not very strong for defence, and they submitted willingly to any conquest but a Jewish one. And the Jews learned to hate them worse than they did Gentiles. The Maccabees pulled down their strongholds, and subjected them to humiliations. And so, in turn, the Samaritans welcomed the Romans, welcomed Herod,—welcomed any foreign conqueror who came to crush the Jews; and thus in the centre of Palestine they stood, an anti-Jewish citadel. They waylaid single Jews going up to Jerusalem; they forbade shelter or food to Jewish travellers; they insulted Jewish religious festivals. And as for the Jews, we learn their feelings in the phrase, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (John viii. 48). They had formerly received Jesus (John iv. 39). Luke records His sympathy with the hated race (x. 33, xvii. 18), but now He was going to Jerusalem as the Jewish Messiah, and they barred the way. They did not like to permit the passage of a multitude of Jews, especially at feast times, when the old national animosity was keenly stirred, surrounding One who, as the Jewish Messiah, was expected to work their overthrow.

54. **James and John.** The sons of thunder (*Boanerges*, Mark iii. 17) wished to flash lightning. Who were the Samaritans to impede the Messiah's march? Let them be served as dwellers in Samaria had been treated in Elijah's day (2 Kings i. 5-14). Yet John was to see these Samaritans baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 14-25). The clause *even as Elijah did* is omitted in the R. V.

55. **Ye know not what manner of spirit.** It is difficult for sinful men to know how easily righteous indignation degenerates into evil wrath. The spirit which was to be poured out on them was a spirit of salvation, not of destruction, and they were to learn this better afterwards (Rom. xii. 19; Jas. i. 19, 20, iii. 16, 17). The most difficult lesson for men or for churches to learn is that persecution and even compulsion to believe is anti-Christian. It does not belong to religion to compel men to be religious. Saul the Pharisee persecuted; Paul the apostle persuaded. This clause and ver. 56 are omitted in the R. V.

56. **To another village.** *To a village of another kind, i.e.* to a Jewish village.

57. **A certain man.** A scribe (Matt. viii. 19). "Is it more than a curious accident that the four incidents recorded illustrate the peculiarities of four marked human temperaments—the choleric (51-56); the sanguine (57, 58); the melancholic (59, 60); and the phlegmatic (61, 62)?" (Farrar). The man had not counted the cost of discipleship, and Jesus showed him the darker side. Was he daunted like the young ruler (Matt. xix. 16-22), or did he go

58 thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not  
 59 where to lay *his* head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my  
 60 father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead;  
 61 but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid  
 62 them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

CHAP. X. 1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every  
 2 city and place whither he himself would come. Therefore

forward like the sons of Zebedee (Matt. xx. 22)? Was he prepared to follow Jesus for the Master's sake, and for that only?

58. *Have nests.* *Have lodging-places.* Birds do not rest in nests.

59. *To go and bury my father.* The man was already a disciple (Matt. viii. 21), who wished to shirk the work he had given himself to under the pretext that he must be with his father when he died to perform the funeral rites. The phrase can hardly mean that his father was dead, for burial in the East follows immediately after death. The gospel does not tempt us. The kingdom of heaven is first a cross, and then a crown (Acts ix. 16).

60. *Let the dead bury, etc.* Let those who have no spiritual life interest themselves in the routine work of ordinary social usages, but those who are called to work for the kingdom and who are full of the new spiritual life, must let that life manifest itself in whatever work for the Master their hands find to do (xiv. 26).

62. *To the plough.* The simile is true of our own day and country, but truer of Eastern life, where the light plough, easily overturned, requires constant attention. "The general lesson of the whole section is, Give yourself wholly to your duty and count the cost (xiv. 25-33). Christ cannot accept conditional service" (Farrar).

## 2. *The Mission of the Seventy, x. 1-24.*

1. *After these things.* After Jesus had left Galilee, and before entering the Perea on His last journey to Jerusalem. See Analysis, p. 25. In this last great journey our Lord evidently wished to make a final appeal to the Jewish nation. The time was short, many places had to be visited simultaneously, and the Saviour chose seventy or seventy-two (for MS. readings differ) disciples, to be His heralds. Jesus probably followed the seventy, visiting the places where they had preceded Him. The mission had evidently a great effect on the people (Luke xii. 1, xiv. 25, xix. 3, II, 37, xxiii. 5).

*Other seventy also.* *Seventy others, others (besides the Twelve), seventy in number.* Many ancient MS. authorities say *seventy and two*. The number has evident reference to the council of seventy or seventy-two elders chosen by Moses (Num. xi. 16), which was represented in our Lord's time by the *Sanhedrin*. They were sent out in pairs, as the Twelve had been.

said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he  
 3 would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways :  
 4 behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry  
 neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes ; and salute no man by the  
 5 way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be*  
 6 to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace  
 7 shall rest upon it : if not, it shall turn to you again. And in  
 the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as  
 they give ; for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not  
 8 from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and  
 9 they receive you, eat such things as are set before you : and  
 heal the sick that are therein ; and say unto them, The  
 10 kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatso-

2. The harvest truly is great. What Jesus had said in Samaria, on the threshold of the Gentile world (John iv. 35), and when He had sent out the Twelve (Matt. ix. 37). The harvest of the spiritual world is a harvest of souls. Jesus exhorts to prayer that men may be *driven forth* to the harvest work.

3. As lambs among wolves. For the work was full of danger, and the danger was not to daunt them, simple and defenceless though they were. "A tradition as old as Clemens Romanus, tells us that St. Peter asked (on the previous occasion), 'But how then if the wolves should tear the lambs?' and that Jesus replied, 'Let not the lambs fear the wolves when the lambs are once dead,' and added the words in Matt. x. 28. There is no reason to doubt this interesting tradition, which many rank as one of the most certain of the *unwritten sayings* of our Lord" (Farrar).

4. Carry neither purse, etc. They were to trust implicitly in God, and travel as men absorbed by one supreme interest, taking no money in their girdle ends, which served the Easterns as purses, nor wallet for provisions, nor a change of sandals, nor were they to delay their journey by the elaborate Eastern salutations. They were to be single-minded, thinking of nothing but their work.

5. Peace be to this house. "The domestic hearth is the place where they were to deliver their exhortations," and their salutation implied that their desire was to bring to others what they possessed, the peace that comes from believing.

6. If the son of peace. *If a son of peace.* If the householder is a man of peaceful heart, then their peace shall be his ; if no soul be in the house fitted to receive the influence of the gospel salutation, then it will return to bless the messenger who uttered the greeting.

7. Eating and drinking, etc. "Every apostle who cometh to you, let him be received as the Lord, but he shall not remain except for one day ; if, however, there be need, then the next day . . . But when the apostle departeth, let him take nothing except bread enough till he lodge again ; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet" (*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, xi.).

9. The kingdom of God, etc. The messengers enter the city, are received



ever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out  
 11 into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of  
 your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you :  
 notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God  
 12 is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, That it shall be  
 more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.  
 13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if  
 the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which  
 have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented,  
 14 sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable  
 15 for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou,  
 Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down  
 16 to hell. He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that  
 despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me,  
 despiseth him that sent me.

into a family circle, heal the sick, and then deliver their public message, which is the same as their Master's. Their presence as messengers is a proof of the *nearness* of the kingdom.

11. **Even the very dust of your city, etc.** A solemn act of renunciation. Those who refused to hear were to be treated as Gentiles, and as the Jew shook off the dust of unclean Gentile lands when he stepped once more on Jewish soil, so the seventy were to break every bond of connection with those who had rejected the message (Acts xiii. 49-51, xviii. 5-7). The message is the same whether men receive it or not.

13. **Woe unto thee, Chorazin !** The thought that men would reject this last appeal carries the Saviour's thoughts back to those who had already rejected Him—to the cities in which He had preached the kingdom with power.

**Chorazin**, a town of Galilee, two miles from Capernaum (see map, p. 31). The Gospels, which record very few of the numberless sayings and deeds of Jesus, are silent about the wonderful miracles worked there, and record only one wonder done at **Bethsaida**.

**Sackcloth and ashes.** Sackcloth was a coarse, dark-coloured cloth (Isa. 1. 3) made of goat's hair, and was used (1) for sacking (Gen. xlii. 25) ; (2) for the rough garments worn by mourners sometimes next the skin (1 Kings xxi. 27 ; Joel i. 8), but generally over the tunic instead of the *abbas* (Jonah iii. 6). Ashes from the hearth, dust, sand, or earth, were thrown on their heads by mourners.

14. **Tyre and Sidon.** Two pairs of cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Tyre and Sidon (Ezek. xxvii., xxviii.), are referred to by Jesus as the great representative instances of the evil in the heathen world and of its overthrow in judgment. They were judged and punished according to their opportunities, which were infinitely less than those of the doomed Galilean cities.

15. **Capernaum.** Christ's own city, which had been made the new Jerusalem or cradle of the kingdom of God, exalted to heaven, shall be brought own to *Hades* or the grave.

16. **He that heareth you, etc.** Jesus and His messengers cannot be



- 17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord,  
 18 even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And  
 he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from  
 19 heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents  
 and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and  
 20 nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in  
 this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but  
 rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.
- 21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee,  
 O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these  
 things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them  
 unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy  
 22 sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and  
 no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the  
 Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

separated. To welcome the herald is to welcome the King, to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ and of God Himself, and they "will make their abode with them" (John xiv. 23). To despise the messenger is to scorn the message and Him who sent it.

17. With joy, for they had been wonderfully successful, and had been able to cure even demoniacal possession.

18. *I beheld Satan, etc. I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven.* While the disciples had been contending with the lesser powers of evil, Jesus had been contemplating the great Tempter, and had been working out into the future. He saw in their success the potency and prophecy of the destruction of Satan's power. The thought was frequently in His mind as the end of His ministry approached, and the last great struggle was at hand (John xii. 31, xvi. 11). Compare Rev. xii. 9.

19. *I have given you power, etc.* What was promised? This, that no power of evil could separate Jesus' disciples from the love of God (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

20. *Your names are written in heaven,* in the census register of the new kingdom (Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 23; Rev. xiii. 8, xx. 12, xxi. 27). No gifts will compensate for the lack of living union to Jesus Christ the Saviour.

21. *Jesus rejoiced, Jesus exulted.* Jesus seldom rejoiced with outward manifestation; but He did so now. This passage is His *Magnificat*. The same word used to express the Virgin Mother's exultation is now used to denote the enthusiasm of spiritual joy which filled the Messiah. His joy found expression in thanksgiving to the Father.

*That Thou hast hid, etc. That (though) Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, Thou didst reveal them unto babes.* The thanks are given for the revelation, not for the concealment.

*Unto babes.* The wise men and the governing classes might reject, but there were sunny, childlike souls not so thoroughly attached to this world but that they could see the light beyond.

22. *All things are delivered, etc.* This whole verse is one of those in which the teaching of the Synoptists (Matt. xxviii. 18) comes into nearest

23 And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately,  
 24 Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see : for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them* ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him,  
 26 saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? He said unto him, What is written in the law ? how readest thou ?  
 27 And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thy-  
 28 self. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right : this  
 29 do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself,

resemblance to that of St. John, which abounds in such passages (John i. 18, iii. 35, v. 26, 27, vi. 44, 46, xiv. 6-9, xvii. 1, 2 ; 1 John v. 20). In the same way we find this view assumed in St. Paul's earlier epistles (*e.g.* 1 Cor. xv. 24, 27), and magnificently developed in the epistles of the captivity (Phil. ii. 9 ; Eph. i. 21, 22).

23. Blessed are the eyes, spoken privately to the disciples. Compare Luke vii. 28.

## II. FROM THE PEREA TO JERUSALEM, X. 25.

### 1. *The Good Samaritan*, 25-37.

25. And, behold, a certain lawyer. This and the following scene are evidently out of their proper place, and should come after xiii. 35.

**Lawyer.** The man was a *scribe*, one whose duty it was to interpret the law, and he came to have a trial of wits with the great Teacher.

**Tempted Him, tested Him, questioned Him,** to discover His orthodoxy or His skill in casuistry. It does not necessarily imply any evil design.

**Master, what shall I do ?** The question is the same as that put by the young ruler in Matt. xix. 16, but is not asked in the same spirit of anxious inquiry. He wishes to exhibit his skill in logical fence.

26. **What is written in the law ?** You are a lawyer, and ought to know. Is it not your very business to answer your own question ?

27. **Thou shalt love, etc.** The summary of the Law from Deut. vi. 5, x. 12 ; Lev. xix. Compare Rom. xiii. 9 ; Gal. v. 13, 14 ; Jas. ii. 8. He gave Jesus' own answer (Matt. xxii. 37).

28. **This do.** You know ; can you act up to your knowledge ? Jesus sets aside the casuistry, and presses the question of personal life and conduct, asking the man to examine himself and test himself by the law he so glibly repeated.

29. **Willing to justify himself.** Plumptre thinks that the lawyer's conscience was half awakened, that he had some misgivings about his honest observance of the second commandment. But there is no trace of that feeling to my mind. The lawyer cleverly put his finger on the one word which was ambiguous, and on which an argument could be raised. He seized on the one word which would bring out the real difference between the teaching of Jesus and the orthodox teaching of the authorized expounders of the Law.

30 said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering, said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half  
 31 dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.  
 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and  
 33 looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” was an Old Testament precept with the same moral contents in it as were in the Christian law of love, but the sphere of the application was narrower in the one case than in the other. The term *neighbours* had been strictly defined in the Old Testament to mean *children of thy people* (Lev. xix. 18), and the application of the principle of love was limited by the Rabbins to the nationality of Israel. Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan took the Old Testament precept, enlarged its horizon to include all men, whether Jews or not, and thus fulfilled or made full the Law of Moses.

30. From Jerusalem to Jericho. A journey of twenty-one miles, through a dangerous rocky gorge, where rock caverns afforded hiding-places for Arab marauders. Herod the Great had cleared the country of these pests, but brigandage had revived, and the Romans had not been able to put it down effectually. The Jericho road was so notoriously infested by brigands that in Jerome's day it was called the *red* or *bloody way*.

And fell among thieves, etc. *And he fell among robbers, who both stripped him, and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead, careless whether he were wholly dead or not.*

31. And by chance, and about the same time, a certain priest was going down that way, or on that road; for there was another and a safer road to Jericho. Jericho was a priestly city, and the priest was returning from his week of service in the Temple.

He passed by on the other side, fearing to linger in the dangerous path, and unwilling, holy man, to risk ceremonial defilement by touching one who might be dead. His devotion to the ceremonial law made him blind to the moral duties enjoined by the Old Testament (Deut. xxii. 4; Isa. lviii. 7).

32. And likewise a Levite. *And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.* The correct translation makes the Levite's conduct the very same as the priest's. This is the only New Testament passage which mentions a Levite.

33. A certain Samaritan. He was not near his home like the others, but on a journey; he was a hated alien, from whose touch the wounded Jew would probably have shrunk as from pollution, with whom no Jew would eat. The story is full of tenderness. He went to the half-dead man, careless of risks to himself from robbers, Roman police, or travelling Jews, bound up his wounds, took his own flasks of oil and wine, purged the wound with wine and soothed the inflammation with oil, set the wounded man on his ass, walked by his side supporting him, and paid for his reception at the inn. Our Lord, who made the Samaritan the type of neighbourliness, had lately

- 34 when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, and went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took  
 35 care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more,  
 36 when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among  
 37 the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.  
 38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village : and a certain woman named Martha received  
 39 him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which  
 40 also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve  
 41 alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful

been repulsed from a Samaritan village (ix. 53), and had been still more recently called a Samaritan by the angry Pharisees (John viii. 48).

Inn, not the *khan* or *caravanserai* of ii. 7, where the guests found shelter only, but a hostelry where a landlord provided for his guests.

37. He that showed mercy. The lawyer did not like to pronounce the hated word Samaritan. "He will not name the Samaritan by name, the haughty hypocrite" (Luther).

Go, and do thou likewise. The lawyer is again brought back to conduct from casuistry. Moral questions are not solved by putting ethical conundrums or logical puzzles. If love exists, it will solve all ethical difficulties.

## 2. At Bethany, 38-42.

38. A certain village. *Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha* (John xi. 1). Most commentators think that the certain reticence in giving names when telling about Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, which is traceable in the Synoptic Gospels, arose from fear of Jewish persecution. The characters of the two sisters given here are preserved in John's account of the household. Martha active (John xi. 20) and visibly intent on household cares (xii. 2); Mary thoughtful and emotional, pouring out her whole soul in one supreme act of love (xi. 31, xii. 3).

40. Cumbered about much serving, *distracted with household care*, came to Him. *Came suddenly up to Him*. She could not help it. She saw Mary sitting in quiet humility, as she went about giving one order after another in her eager, busy way, and it made her, loving, bustling matron, more nervous. "We almost seem to hear the undertone of 'It is no use for me to tell her.'"

41. Martha, Martha. A loving, almost playful rebuke in the repetition of the name (xxii. 31; Acts ix. 4).



42 and troubled about many things ; but one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

CHAP. XI. 1 And it came to pass that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which

Careful and troubled. Mind preoccupied and body that cannot remain quiet.

42. *One thing is needful.* What he said to the young ruler (Matt. xix. 17), who was probably Lazarus ; that absolute rest on Him which makes the whole life restful.

*That good part.* The one thing needful. It is not Martha's hospitality that is rebuked, nor even the "fret and fuss" by which it was accompanied, but the tendency to reprobate another kind of devotion which her busy mind could not appreciate.

### 3. *The Lord's Prayer*, xi. 1-13.

1. *In a certain place.* Somewhere in the Perea, where Jesus' final conflict with the Pharisees took place, a conflict provoked by the enthusiasm with which the people had responded to his appeal made through the seventy. This great and final rupture took place on a day crowded with the events described in chaps. xi., xii. The Jews prayed three times a day :—(1) At nine o'clock A.M., the *third hour* ; (2) at noon, the *sixth hour* ; (3) at three o'clock P.M., the *ninth hour* ; and Jesus probably observed these hours. The Jews prayed standing, with the arms stretched out, the palms of the hands uppermost.

*Lord, teach us, etc.* Jewish teachers prescribed forms of prayer to their disciples, many fragments of which remain, and John had done so, but his form has not been preserved.

2. *When ye pray, say, etc.* A comparison of the best MSS. tells us that the form recorded by Luke was :—*Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread* (bread for the coming day). *And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.* The other phrases in the A.V. have been added from Matthew, but we may include them as part of Jesus' *Model Prayer*.

*Our Father.* Father, because we ought to approach God in holy love as well as in holy fear, while the *our* teaches us that the Fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of mankind. The Bible gives no trace of a solitary religion ; if we are to serve or worship God aright, we must find companions or make them. The mere humanitarian idea of fraternity is impossible ; there can be no brotherhood without a Father. Note how this model of prayer is itself founded on the sum of the law and the prophets. Two petitions sum up the first table, and three the second ; two exhibit the filial relationship, and three the paternal.



art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.  
 3 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by  
 4 day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins : for we also  
 forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not  
 5 into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. And he said unto  
 them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him  
 at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ;  
 6 for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have

**Hallowed be Thy name.** The name of God is used to express the sum of all the attributes of His Being, and it is to be treated as holy. The holy image of God is to shine in glory in the depth of the hearts of His children.

**Thy kingdom come.** The change in external society which this petition asks for rests on an inward spiritual and personal change of heart, which, as it passes from one to another, expands into a reconciled and sanctified brotherhood of mankind, who will live as Christ lived to do the will of His Father (John v. 30, vi. 38).

3. **Give us day by day, etc.** "The prayer (1) acknowledges that we are indebted to God for our *simplest* boons ; (2) asks them for *all* ; (3) asks them only day by day ; (4) asks for no more (Prov. xxx. 8 ; John vi. 27). St. Luke's version brings out the continuity of the gift (be giving day by day) ; St. Matthew's, its immediate need (give to-day)" (Farrar). Many good people think it necessary to spiritualize the "bread" ; but no poor man will hesitate about the *primary* meaning of the request.

4. **Forgive us, etc.** "Forgiving and forgetting is the pardon which we desire from God ; therefore, forgiving and forgetting is the pardon which we are to grant to man" (Hare). It is on pardon and the sense of it that union of the soul with God rests ; there is pardon in Fatherhood, and there must be pardon in brotherhood also. Luke makes no allusion to the Pauline doctrines of atonement and justification, to the relation between the sacrifice of Christ and the pardon of sin. He, Paul's companion, simply records the words which Jesus spake before His great sacrifice was finished.

**Lead us not into temptation, etc.** No one can think of temptation without dread, although it does often happen that the Christian character is strengthened and purified by temptation. Tempt has a double meaning in Scripture :—(1) to place a man in such a position that he must make a choice between good and evil ; (2) to *induce* him to choose the evil. God cannot tempt in the second sense ; but the Evil One can and does.

5. **He said unto them.** Jesus assures His disciples of the efficacy of prayer by a parable (5-8), by appeal to common experience (9, 10), from the Fatherhood of God (11-13).

**Shall go unto him at midnight.** The scene is Oriental. In the East journeys were frequently made in the evening to avoid the heat, and midnight unexpected arrivals are not uncommon. The verses are a picture of poverty-stricken Jewish life. The friend arrives at midnight, and there is no food in the house, but laws of hospitality compel even the poorest to feed a guest. The man goes to his neighbour, poor like himself, living in a one-roomed house, the whole family sleeping on the divan or raised platform which filled half the space in the apartment, and beseeches with almost shameless importunity till he gets three loaves for himself and his guest.

- 7 nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not : the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed ; I cannot rise and give thee.
- 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise
- 9 and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ;
- 10 knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him
- 11 that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if *he*
- 12 *ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ? Or if he shall
- 13 ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?
- 14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake ;
- 15 and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

8. **Because of his importunity.** *Unblushing persistency.* The details in parables are not to be pressed, and the one lesson Jesus here urged was persistency and importunity in prayer. We are not to let God go till He has blessed us. The defect in the parable is that God is not like the friend, asleep, unwilling to get up to disturb the children, etc.—that defect Jesus supplies at once by referring to the fatherly feelings of men.

9. **Ask and it shall.** Notice the gradation of words, ask—seek—knock, the increasing vehemence of entreaty, taken from the parable.

11. **Of you that is a father.** The appeal to personal experience. What do you do when your children ask ? Set a father's heart inside the breast of the neighbour from whom you wish to borrow three loaves, and see how that lights up the thought of persistency.

13. **Shall your heavenly Father.** The lesson ends where the prayer had begun, in the Fatherhood of God, who will give the Holy Spirit ; and there are no limits to what He can bring us, save what love imposes.

4. *The Dumb Demoniac and Accusations by the Pharisees, 14-36 ;*

Matt. xii. 22-37 ; Mark iii. 22-30.

15. **He casteth out.** Scribes in the crowd told the people that His power was a case of demoniac possession. *Beelzebub*, the heathen deity whom the Jews made king of "evil spirits." The Evangelist wrote Beelzebul or Baalzebul, which was an intentional caricature of Baalzebub. Baalzebub meant *Fly-God*, and the Jews said Baalzebul, and made it *Filth-God*, and applied the term to Satan. It was the scribes who came down from Jerusalem who made these insinuations. We can see them going among the crowd artfully suggesting in whispers that His power was demoniac. The rude,

- 16 And others, tempting *him*, sought of him a sign from heaven.  
 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a  
 18 house *divided* against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?  
 19 because ye say that I cast out devils though Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast  
 20 *them* out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of  
 21 God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth  
 22 his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.  
 23 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth

straightforward populace could scarcely have invented such an unscrupulous, plausible lie; it had the mark of Jerusalem upon it, and came from men who were accustomed to see craft triumphant in the person of the wily Annas.

16. *Others, tempting Him.* This was the fifth time Jesus had been asked for a sign, *i.e.* that He should do a miracle on demand (John ii. 18, vi. 30; Matt. xii. 38; Mark viii. 11); but now that the opposition to our Lord had become strong, the Pharisees were able to make His refusal lessen the already lessened confidence of the people in His power. "The demand for a sign from heaven was a demand that He should, as the Messiah of their expectation, accredit Himself by a great overmastering miracle; it was therefore fundamentally similar to the temptation in the wilderness which He had repelled" (Lange). And if He refused, He saw that He was to be finally rejected by the leaders of the people (Matt. xvi. 4).

18. *If Satan also be divided.* Our Lord here speaks of Satan as a personality, a kingdom, a house, a man. If he works against himself, he cannot stand.

19. *Do your sons.* Jewish exorcists pretended to cast out devils. They were had in repute, and professed that they did for their patients what David had done for Saul. "They take roots, fumigate the patient, administer to him a decoction, and the spirit vanishes." If these imperfect cures were the work of God, how can perfect cures be the work of the devil?

20. *By the finger of God.* The arm is the seal and symbol of strength, and the finger the sign of the ease with which the strength acts. "God has only to lift His finger and the devils depart, and He allows me to manifest His power." This near presence of the power of God manifests the near approach of His kingdom.

21. *When a strong man.* Satan is the *strong man*; the world is his *palace* (John xii. 31, xvi. 11); men's souls are his *goods* (2 Tim. ii. 26). But Jesus is the *stronger than he* (1 Cor. ii. 15).

23. *He that is not with me.* The figure is that of a troop which has been dispersed by a victorious enemy, and which its captain, who has put the enemy to flight, seeks to rally. False allies, who are allies only, and not under the captain's orders, hinder rather than promote the rallying. Jesus is the impersonation of the kingdom of God. God has no allies save those who

24 not with me scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I  
25 came out. And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and  
26 garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which  
28 thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there

fight under the banner of Christ. It is not enough to drive evil out; Christ must fill the heart, or the evil will return. Can the exorcists do that?

24. When the unclean spirit . . . through dry places. *Through deserts*, supposed in Jewish folk-lore to be the places where devils dwelt. The scape-goat was driven out into the desert or wilderness.

26. Worse than the first. For what enables a man to live a new life is not merely to be emptied of former sins and evil affections; but to be filled with a new and holy love which expands and expels the evil. Man cannot live on nothings, on negations. If he lives he must love something good, or something bad.

27. A certain woman. Perhaps one who had been a demoniac and had been healed by Jesus; she had heard the conversation and felt its truth, and her love for Jesus made her utter the exclamation (i. 28, 48).

28. Yea, rather, blessed, etc. "How many women have blessed the Holy Virgin, and desired to be such a mother as she was; what hinders them? Christ has made for us a wide way to this happiness. Not only women but men may tread it—the way of obedience" (Chrysostom).

29. And when the, etc. *And when the multitudes were gathering together unto Him, He began to say, This generation is an evil generation: it seeketh a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites*, etc. Jesus went back to the demand for a sign from heaven—an insult which never failed to move Him deeply. The people ask for a sign, for some wonderful thing. They shall have it. What more wonderful than that heathens, untrained of God, should accept Solomon and Jonah, when God's own people, with law and prophets to guide them, should reject God's Son? Matthew (xii. 38-42) makes Jesus use Jonah as a double sign:—(1) As affording a type of the resurrection; (2) as a preacher of repentance to a sinful nation. Luke does not refer to the resurrection. He points to the wisdom of Solomon and the preaching of Jonah on the one hand, and the faith of the Queen of Sheba and of the Ninevites on the other; and contrasts that with Jesus, greater than Solomon and Jonah, and His rejection by Israel.



- shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.
- 30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the
- 31 Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them : for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and, behold, a
- 32 greater than Solomon *is* here. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it : for they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and, behold,
- 33 a greater than Jonas *is* here. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the
- 34 light. The light of the body is the eye : therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ; but when *thine* eye is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.
- 35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not
- 36 darkness. If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.
- 37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine

31. The queen of the south. *The Queen of Sheba* or of Yemen, in the south of Arabia (1 Kings x. 1-13 ; 2 Chron. ix. 1-12).

32. The men of Nineve (Jonah iii. 5).

33. No man, when he hath lighted, etc. *No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter in may see the light. The lamp of thy body is thine eye ; but when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light ; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Look, therefore, whether the light that is in thee be not darkness . . . it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light.* Said to explain how the Jews did not see Jesus to be greater than Solomon or than Jonah. Men may have eyes and yet not see ; or a lamp, and yet be in the darkness. If they set the lighted lamp in the cellar with the floor between them and the light, or cover it with the grain measure with wood between them and the light, they will be in darkness. If there is anything wrong with the eye, the man may see double or mistake shapes and colours, or be in total darkness. The Jews had the law and the prophets for their lamp, but they buried them in the cellar of rabbinical traditions or covered them over with their coarse, unspiritual Messianic expectations, and therefore were in darkness. The Jewish eye was not single, but evil, hating spirituality, and could not discern God's Son when He came. Get the eye right, Jesus says : put nothing between the lamp (the Word of God) and the eye.

5. *Jesus dines with a Pharisee, 37-54.*

37. A certain Pharisee, etc. *Now as He spake a Pharisee asketh Him to take the noonday meal* (a light meal of dates and bread) *with him. The*



38 with him : and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when  
 the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed  
 39 before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye  
 Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter ;  
 40 but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye  
 fools, did not he that made that which is without make that  
 41 which is within also ? But rather give alms of such things as ye  
 42 have ; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe  
 unto you, Pharisees ! for ye tithe mint and rue, and all

invitation was in all probability designed to get Jesus away from the people in order to entrap Him, and perhaps get rid of Him. The first verse of the 12th chapter, which describes a surging crowd, seems to indicate that the common people were alarmed for the safety of our Lord, and rescued Him from the Pharisees.

Sat down to meat. The words imply that Jesus sat down at once to the slight refreshment provided. On the table there was probably a large dish (*platter*) with dates or figs and some loaves of bread.

38. That He had not first washed, *i.e.* performed the ablutions prescribed by the oral law. "The duty of cleanliness had been turned by the oral law into a rigorous set of cumbersome and needless ablutions, each performed with certain elaborate methods and gesticulations (Mark vii. 2, 3), which had nothing to do with religion, or even with the Levitical law, but only with Pharisaic tradition and the oral law" (Farrar).

39. Now do ye Pharisees. Perhaps, *Well now ! That is like you Pharisees !* The comparison is between the religious life of a Pharisee, and a host who cleans the outside of the great dish, but leaves foul meat in it.

Ravening and wickedness. *Avarice carried out into the act, and the depravity which causes it.*

40. Ye fools. God who made the body made the soul, and a well-washed body will not make a polluted soul acceptable to Him ; any more than will a well-scrubbed dish make diseased meat palatable.

41. Give alms. Let *mercy* and its expression in *alms-giving* take the place of *avarice* and its expression *ravening*. Let Christian love work from within outwards, and it will purify everything (Mark vii. 18, 19). "It is love which purifies, not lustrations." What defiles is selfishness.

42. Ye tithe mint, etc. The tithe system of the Jews was somewhat intricate. The Palestine Jews were a nation of peasant-proprietors cultivating their own lands, their business agriculture, and their wealth the increase of fruits of the ground, or cattle. *The fruits of the ground* were subject to these deductions :—(1) Every year *first-fruits* of wheat, barley, figs, grapes, olives, pomegranates, and dates were ordained to be offered to the priests, also *first-fruits* of corn, wine, oil, and fleece, which latter were called the *heave-offering*. The Law of Moses did not prescribe the quantity of these *first-fruits* or *heave-offerings*, but it varied from a fortieth to a sixtieth of the whole. These *first-fruits* were paid to the priests. (2) What remained after the first-fruits had been deducted was then tithed, and the *tithe*—tenth part—was paid over to the Levites at Jerusalem. The Levites in turn paid a tenth of what they got, that is, a tenth of the tenth, to the priests. (3) What remained was again tithed, and the tenth was to be taken two years to Jerusalem

manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God : these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other  
 43 undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees ! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.  
 44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them*  
 45 are not aware of *them*. Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us  
 46 also. And he said, Woe unto you also, *ye* lawyers ! for ye laide men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye your-

either in kind or turned into money, and spent at the Temple on the Levites there ; while every third year this *second tithe* was to be given to the poor neighbours. Hence, if we take

The increase at 6000 bushels,  
 The remainder, 5900   ,,

First-fruits were 100 bushels.  
 yielded for the *First Tithe* 590 bushels, of which the priest got 59, and the Levites 431 bushels.

The remainder, 5310   ,,

yielded the *Second Tithe*, 531 bushels, which was spent every two years on the Levites, and every third year on the poor.

The remainder, 4779 bushels, the husbandman kept for himself.

*The increase of cattle* was subjected to—(1) *First-fruits*. The first-born of all clean animals were handed over to the priests, and the value of the first-born of all unclean beasts was paid to the priests in money. (2) Then the remainder was tithed, and the tenth part was paid to the Levites. No penalty seems to have been exacted for the non-payment of tithes, and they were regarded in the light of offerings. A Jew who lived outside of the land of Palestine did not pay tithes at all. Jewish lawyers asserted that every herb which was used as man's meat was to be tithed, and this phrase *man's meat* led to all sorts of casuistry. Jesus does not object even to the scrupulous tithing of the Pharisees. He contrasts the ridiculous eagerness to tithe the most insignificant herbs with the disregard of that love to God which comes out in love to man.

43. *Uppermost seats*. Note on v. 17.

44. *Ye are as graves*. If a man touched a grave he was ceremonially unclean, and the Jews took pains to make their graves visible, but sometimes a man might touch a grave without knowing it. Tiberias, for example, was accidentally built on an old graveyard, and the stricter Jews would not enter it. Men when they first meet the Pharisees may suppose they are talking to saints, but they are in communication with those who will surely corrupt. Jesus denounces the Pharisees for their frivolous scrupulosity and hypocrisy (39-42), their pride and vainglorious spirit (43), and for their corrupting influence on the people (44).

45. *One of the lawyers*. See note on v. 17.

46. *Burdens grievous to be borne*. The lawyers spent their time in multiplying the ceremonial observances, until the simple rites of the Mosaic

47 selves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe  
 unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and  
 48 your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow  
 the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and  
 49 ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom  
 of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some*  
 50 of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all  
 the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the  
 51 world, may be required of this generation; from the blood  
 of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between  
 the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be  
 52 required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye  
 have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in your-  
 53 selves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as  
 he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees  
 began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to speak  
 54 of many things; laying wait for him, and seeking to catch  
 something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

CHAP. XII. 1 In the meantime, when there were gathered

Law, based on love to God and to man, became an intolerable burden, which pressed heaviest on the poorest. Their casuistry, which multiplied ceremonies for the people, invented exceptions for themselves.

47. **Your fathers.** The continuity of evil is expressed in the thought that children like fathers build tombs for the slain.

48. **Ye allow, etc.** *Ye are witnesses, and consent unto the works of.*

49. **The wisdom of God.** Various explanations of the phrase have been given. Upon the whole, Godet's seems to be the best. He says the Book of Proverbs is meant, and that what follows is a condensed quotation or paraphrase from Prov. i. 20-31, in which prophets and apostles are the living organs of the Spirit of God, and their persecution the setting at naught God's counsel.

51. **Zacharias** (2 Chron. xxiv. 20).

52. **Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.** The scribes reserved the interpretation of Scripture for themselves exclusively, held that the common people could not understand God's Word, and that they alone could instruct them. Instead of giving this instruction in the living knowledge of God, they darkened the plain meaning and prevented the people from knowing God as they might have done.

53. **And as He said, etc.** *And when He was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to set themselves vehemently against Him . . . lying in wait to catch something out of His mouth.* Jesus alone, away from His disciples, in the midst of furious enemies. Their plans to entrap Jesus into some overt word or act against the government of the day are described in Matt. xxii. 15-22, and Mark xii. 13-17.

6. *The Leaven of the Pharisees*, xiii. 1-12.

1. **When there were, etc.** *When the myriads of the multitude were gathered.* The surging crowd, who suddenly gathered, seems to indicate that

together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, 2 which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall 3 not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets 4 shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops. And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and 5 after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear 6 him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not

the common people were alarmed for the safety of Jesus, and assembled to rescue Him from the Pharisees. Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to encourage His disciples, whom He must have alarmed by His prediction in ver. 49: *I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute*. He tells them that the gospel will be publicly and universally preached (2, 3); that their Father in heaven will watch over them (4-7); that those of them who will courageously trust shall be gloriously recompensed and acknowledged (8-10); and that the Holy Spirit will be with them in all time of anxiety (11, 12).

First of all, Beware ye. *Beware first of all*. Leaven is a common simile for any active principle, whether good or bad, which spreads rapidly.

2. For there is nothing, etc. *But there is nothing veiled that shall not be unveiled*. There seems to be a double line of thought in this and the following verses. Our Lord begins with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which conceals, under the veil of spurious sanctity, such evil deeds as He had laid bare (xi. 42-51). It aimed at concealment, but uselessly, for all must be unveiled in the end. From this thought He is led in prophetic vision to contemplate the future course of the new doctrine of His kingdom, which, begun in parables and quiet conversation, shall yet be openly proclaimed in the ears of the whole world. "The mouth of the scribes shall be stopped, and the teaching of the apostles shall be heard throughout the world." Christianity, obliged to conceal itself in the Church of the Upper Chamber until Pentecost, would, after that downpouring of the Holy Spirit, spread, publish itself in the most public places in the cities (1 Cor. iv. 5). The words also convey a warning that we are all responsible for our heedless words.

3. Closets. *Inner chambers*; the word means, in the first instance, *larders*.

4. My friends (John xv. 14, 15). Jesus had just escaped from enemies; and He is predicting that His disciples shall have persecution. His words and tones are all tenderness. Jesus does not promise that our lives shall always be safe (He had to die), or that no trials shall afflict His disciples: He promises that God knows all that they endure, and that they may confront all, sure of His friendship and sympathy.

5. Fear Him, *i.e.* God. We are not to fear, but to resist the devil.

6. Five sparrows. The little birds were sold in the market stuck in rows on a wooden skewer, at two for a farthing (Matt. x. 29) and five for two



7 one of them is forgotten before God : but even the very hairs  
 of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore : ye are  
 8 of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you,  
 Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of  
 9 man also confess before the angels of God : but he that  
 denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of  
 10 God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of  
 man, it shall be forgiven him : but unto him that blasphemeth  
 11 against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when  
 they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates and  
 powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer,  
 12 or what ye shall say : for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in  
 the same hour what ye ought to say.

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to  
 14 my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he

farthings—two for a farthing and one to the bargain. That single sparrow  
 which the merchant thought so little about that he gave it away, God knew  
 all about. Does He not think still more about a disciple?

8. **Whosoever shall confess me.** The confession may cost the disciple  
 much, but a recompense remains, for the glorified Jesus will proclaim before  
 God and the heavenly host what the disciple did for Him in His estate of  
 humiliation.

9. **He that denieth me, etc.** As Luther went through the streets of  
 Worms to the audience hall, where he was to face the emperor and the  
 Diet, it is said that there came voices from out the sea of faces that crowded  
 street, windows, and house-tops, repeating in solemn tones the words of this  
 verse.

10. **Against the Son of Man** (Luke xxiii. 34).

**Against the Holy Ghost** (Matt. xii. 31, 32 ; Mark iii. 29, 30 ; 1 John v. 16).  
 This awful sin is in the other evangelists connected with attributing Jesus'  
 gracious works to Satanic power. It seems to mean the final and contemptu-  
 ous rejection of Jesus as God's Saviour. Many pious souls torture themselves  
 with doubts about whether they have committed it. They are least likely to  
 have done so who scrupulously question themselves about it.

11. **Unto the synagogues, etc.** Jesus enumerates the various kinds of  
 hostile authorities that will be arrayed against the disciples : Jewish tribunals  
 (*synagogues*, in which civil and criminal cases against Jewish law were tried),  
 Gentile rulers, from the provincial prefect or tributary king up to the emperor  
 (*magistrates*), the culture and science of the time (*powers*).

**Take ye no thought.** *Be not too anxious how or what ye shall answer.*  
 When Peter, Stephen, and Paul were accused, they preached the gospel for  
 answer, and made the dock a pulpit (Acts v. 29 ; vii. 2 ; xxvi. 2).

#### 7. *The Rich Fool: Discourses, 13-54.*

13. **The inheritance.** Jesus had been speaking solemnly about law-courts  
 and judgments, and an incongruous fool thinks that here is the man who,  
 better than any professional scribe or lawyer, will get him justice. All that



said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over  
 15 you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of  
 covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abun-  
 16 dance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a  
 parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man  
 17 brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself,  
 saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to  
 18 bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do : I will pull  
 down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow  
 19 all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul,  
 thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine  
 20 ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou*  
 fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose  
 21 shall those things be which thou hast provided? So *is* he  
 that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

this man's soul can contain is, that he has not got his proper share of *the* inheritance. Jesus sternly repressed him, and then took him as a text for a sermon on covetousness.

14. **Man.** Compare Rom. ii. 1, 3. The word expresses indignation and rebuke.

15. **Of covetousness.** *Of all covetousness.* We are warned against selfishness of all kinds, whether in the passive form of holding to what we have, or in craving what belongs to our neighbours (1 Tim. vi. 10-17).

**A man's life.** Jesus first states the general truth, that the real worth of a man is not to be measured by money, and then proceeds to illustrate by a parable.

16. **The ground, etc.** "In this parable (peculiar to Luke) our Lord evidently referred mentally to the story of Nabal, whose name means 'fool' or 'churl' (1 Sam. xxv.)" (Farrar). The point of the parable seems to be, that the man was a fool because he made sure that those possessions of his were so truly his own that he could not be separated from them. He speaks of *my* fruits, *my* barns, *my* goods, in the same way as he says *my* soul. He had gathered all that he had, in what he thought was a sure place, and asked, Cannot I do what I like with my own—rest, eat, drink, and enjoy? A man's own is what he cannot be separated from, and death can easily separate him from his wealth (Jas. iv. 13-15).

18. **Barns.** Rather *storehouses* to hold all kinds of goods.

19. **I will say.** "What folly! Had thy soul been a sty, what else couldest thou have promised to it? Art thou so bestial, so ignorant of the soul's goods, that thou pledgest it, the foods of the flesh? And dost thou convey to thy *soul* the things which the draught receiveth?" (St. Basil). This rich fool chose a life of self-indulgence, because he thought death and judgment a long way off; others take to it because life is short, and they do not believe in a life after death (1 Cor. xv. 32). Compare also James iv. 13-17, v. 1-3.

20. **This night thy soul shall be required of thee.** *This night, they require thy soul of thee.*

21. **Rich towards God.** This does not mean rich in spiritual things, but

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you,  
 23 Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for  
 24 the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat,  
 24 and the body *is more* than raiment. Consider the ravens :  
 for they neither sow nor reap ; which neither have storehouse  
 nor barn ; and God feedeth them : how much more are ye  
 25 better than the fowls ? And which of you, with taking thought,  
 26 can add to his stature one cubit ? If ye then be not able to  
 do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest ?  
 27 Consider the lilies how they grow : they toil not, they spin  
 not ; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory  
 28 was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe  
 the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast  
 into the oven ; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of  
 29 little faith ? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall  
 30 drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things  
 do the nations of the world seek after ! and your Father  
 31 knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek  
 ye the kingdom of God : and all these things shall be added

rather rich in the presence of God. The truly rich are those whose riches are in God's keeping ; and riches may be placed in God's hands when we lend them to Him. We have treasure in God when God is our creditor. Thus Jesus led the disciples to what He had said to the Pharisees, xi. 41. Compare vers. 33, 34.

22. **Take no thought.** *Be not too anxious.* This discourse is addressed to the disciples, not to the multitude, and their warrant for absence of anxiety is the Fatherhood of God (30). They are part of God's family, and the house-father provides for the children. Jesus' statement is, Be not too anxious about this life and its needs (22) ; for He who gave the greater, the life and the body, will give the less, the food and the clothes (23). Then He illustrates from nature. The rich fool thought of nothing but *sowing* and *reaping* and *barns*, yet he died. The ravens think nothing about these, yet they live (24). Divine power shown in nature ; human powerlessness manifested in death.

25. **To his stature.** The argument is, If you cannot make yourself grow, why be so anxious to try to do much more important things ? (25, 26). The lilies (beautiful *red anemones*) do not think about it, yet they grow ; even the grass, which lives only to be burnt, grows—and God does all that (27, 28). There is a beautiful and subtle analogy between a flower torn from its stalk and a man carried off from all his earthly possessions.

29. **Seek not ye, etc.** The application of the whole. The disciples are the children of God ; they belong to the kingdom of heaven, which is not founded, like other kingdoms, on force or fraud, but on union with God. Let us manifest that union and acknowledge that Fatherhood, by acknowledging the brotherhood of mankind in deeds of Christian love (29-34).

31. **Seek ye the kingdom, etc.** The kingdom is that highest good which

- 32 unto you. Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good  
 33 pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and  
 give alms ; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a  
 treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief  
 34 approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your  
 35 treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be  
 36 girded about, and *your* lights burning ; and ye yourselves like  
 unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from  
 the wedding ; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may  
 37 open unto him immediately. Blessed *are* those servants,  
 whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching : verily I  
 say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to  
 38 sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And

when a man gets, he not only gets what is better than other things, but what contains all other really good things in it.

32. Fear not, little flock. They were in the midst of foes, and were to endure tribulation ; but they belonged to God, and were then His kingdom on earth.

33. Sell that ye have. The early disciples obeyed this in most literal fashion (Acts ii. 44, 45), and it sometimes led to troubles (Acts vi. 1). "There are times when, to disentangle himself and practise Christian love, the believer must give up everything ; there are other times when, to secure real freedom and be better able to give, he must keep and administer" (Godet).

Moth corrupteth. A large portion of Eastern wealth consisted of money and *clothes*.

34. Where your treasure is. Every gift made by genuine human love is so much treasure laid up in heaven, and a debt payable by God, who is Love itself. The heart follows the treasure, and if it is in God the heart will be always turned heavenward. "The heart, once set free from its earthly burden, will live on the new attachment to which it is given up, and on the expectation with which it is thus inspired" (Godet).

35. Loins be girded. This "parable-germ" perhaps grew to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. xxv. 1). The common dress throughout the Roman Empire in our Lord's time consisted of a long tunic (*tunica alba*, hence the ecclesiastical *alb*) with a sheet or plaid wound round the body. The tunic was girt when men had to walk fast or to work. Jesus has shown that our treasure ought to be in heaven, that we may be whole-hearted towards God. He enforces this whole-heartedness in three parables :—(1) The master returning to his house (35-38) ; the thief (39, 40) ; and the two stewards (41-48).

36. When he will return. The master is away, and the servants watch with their flowing tunics tucked into their girdles, a lamp in the hand and food on the table. When the master returns he is so impressed with their whole-hearted service that he refuses to treat them as servants, and makes them sit down to the food prepared for himself. Master and servants are within the sphere of love.

37. And serve them. Perhaps the disciples remembered these words

if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third  
 39 watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. And  
 this know, that if the good man of the house had known  
 what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and  
 40 not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye  
 therefore ready also : for the Son of man cometh at an hour  
 when ye think not.

41 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable  
 42 unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is  
 that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler  
 over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due  
 43 season? Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he

when Jesus took the towel, on the eve of the first Lord's Supper, girded Himself and washed their feet ; and the memory and the incident may have added to their remorse when they did not watch at Gethsemane, and when they fled at their Lord's capture.

38. *Second watch.* "The proper Jewish reckoning recognised only three watches. . . . (1) *the first or beginning of watches*, from sunset to 10 P.M. (Lam. ii. 19) ; (2) *the middle watch*, from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M. (Judg. vii. 19) ; (3) *the morning watch*, from 2 A.M. to sunrise (Ex. xiv. 24 ; 1 Sam. xi. 11). After the Roman supremacy the number was increased to four, sometimes called the *first, second, third, and fourth watch* ; sometimes by the term *even*, closing at 9 P.M. ; *midnight* ; *cock-crowing* at 3 A.M. ; and *morning*, at 6 A.M." (Maclear).

39. *The thief would come.* There is a doubleness in the Second Coming of the Lord, as in every other act of divine grace. He comes in love to waiting servants and treats them as friends ; He comes in wrath to despoil heedless enemies.

*Broken through. Dug through ;* for Eastern houses have often mud or wattle walls.

40. *Be ye therefore ready.* Whole-hearted service is continuous service : the Christian should be always so disentangled from the world that he can always go when God calls him, and yet so engaged with work for the Master that he can be always busy till the time comes.

41. *Then Peter said.* Who are to be the true servants who get such rewards for whole-hearted service, the Twelve or the multitude? Jesus answers by a parable which says that the true servant is the one who renders true service, whether he be apostle or simple Christian member. Our Lord describes two stewards, the one ruling and distributing food, the other overbearing and indulging his own appetite ; the one is promoted, the other is punished in proportion to his privileges and to his abuse of them (43-48). For exceptional privileges, if rejected, imply exceptional guilt and punishment.

42. *To give them their portion of meat, etc.* "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, *to feed the Church of God*" (Acts xx. 28). Did Peter remember this answer to his question when the Lord gave him His final commandment, *Feed my lambs* (John xxi. 15-17)?



- 44 cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that  
 45 he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that  
 servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming ; and  
 shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat  
 46 and drink, and to be drunken ; the lord of that servant will  
 come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour  
 when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will  
 47 appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that  
 servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*,  
 neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many  
 48 stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy  
 of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whom-  
 soever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and  
 to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask  
 the more.
- 49 I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I, if it  
 50 be already kindled ? But I have a baptism to be baptized  
 with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !  
 51 Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell  
 52 you, Nay ; but, rather division : for from henceforth there

45. Delayeth his coming. Compare 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

46. Cut him in sunder. The words mean to *cleave in two*, and such a terrible punishment was in use in ancient times and among several nations. It is alluded to in the Old Testament (2 Sam. xii. 31 ; 1 Chron. xx. 3 ; Dan. ii. 5). But as those who suffer in the text are afterwards supposed to be living, it is probable that the phrase is to be translated, *severely scourge*.

47. That servant which knew, etc. A solemn warning to all who sin with their eyes open, and perhaps a secret warning to Judas. Jesus always implies that man's knowledge is the measure of his responsibilities, and that tenderness will be shown to the ignorant (x. 12, 13). It is implied that there is no such thing as complete moral ignorance (Rom. i. 20, ii. 14, 15).

49. To send fire. The times are not such for any to think too much about earthly treasure, for they are to be full of trouble. Jesus says that He is to be a firebrand. "There is a remarkable unwritten saying of Christ, *He that is near me, is near the fire*" (Farrar).

What will I, etc. Longing that the final crisis of His work would come. For Jesus was carrying continually during these last days the burden of Gethsemane and Calvary. He seemed to long to get face to face with the final struggle when He could say, "It is finished."

50. I have a baptism. Compare Matt. xx. 22 ; Mark x. 38.

51. To give peace. Jesus is the Prince of peace, and will bring it in the end ; but peace comes after wars, and Jesus foresees that after His death "two humanities will henceforth be in conflict within the bosom of every nation, and under every roof, and this thought profoundly moves the heart of the Prince of peace. Hence the broken style of the following words" (Godet).



shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two  
53 against three. The father shall be divided against the son,  
and the son against the father; the mother against the  
daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-  
in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law  
against her mother-in-law.

54 And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise  
out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower;  
55 and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say,  
56 There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites,  
ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how  
57 is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even  
of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate,  
*as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be  
delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the  
judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into  
59 prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou  
hast paid the very last mite.

52. **Three against two.** The *five* are mentioned in ver. 53.

54. **To the people.** Jesus now turns to the people to make an urgent appeal to them not to delay in accepting the Christ.

**A cloud.** Clouds from the Mediterranean brought showers, winds from the south brought the simoom.

55. **Heat, scorching heat or hot wind**—the simoom.

56. **Ye do not discern this time.** John the Baptist, and even Jesus, appeared, and yet they who were so weather-wise could not see that a solemn hour had struck for them.

57. **Even of yourselves.** They had seen for themselves John the Baptist and Jesus; surely they could judge for themselves and know how urgent their case was.

58. **When thou goest.** A parable to teach the need of instantly accepting God's mercy offered in Christ. The people are like a debtor who has been seized by his creditor, and might make terms; promise to set aside a certain portion of his earnings, for example; if he delays, he is lost. He will be imprisoned, and then no composition can be made, for he can do no work.

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